



# LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE

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# LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

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OCTOBER 1904.

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## *The Tiger of Muscovy.*

BY FRED WHISHAW.

### CHAPTER XIX.

SAID Muirhead to me, returning to his lodging from the Court one evening: 'Truly our fair friend has her hands full of suitors, and she will prove herself wise indeed if she convert none of them into enemies!'

'And which is the favoured one to-day?' I asked, laughing.

'I am not sure,' said Muirhead, 'for according to her known method, known to thee and to me (though, thanks be to Providence, I am no suitor), she has for each one sweet word ten bitter ones; but I should say that she is kinder to young Alexis Nagoy than to any other, though, mark you, there is more scorn than kindness even for the most favoured.'

'If it be Nagoy,' said I, relieved, 'the favour is for a purpose.'

'I think you are right,' Muirhead laughed, 'and that the purpose is to deceive the fair Maria.'

'And who comes next in favour?' I asked; but Muirhead shook his head and refused to give an opinion. 'How can I tell?' he said—'since, firstly, it is the heart of Amy Romalyn, that mysterious citadel, which is besieged, and, secondly, since the besiegers are, among others, the Cæsar, the Cæsarevitch, and that marvel of a boyar the Knyaz (prince) Krapatkin, who dares with mysterious impunity to play lion to Ivan's tiger. That he remains alive is the greatest mystery.'

A little later, neither of us having spoken for a minute or two,

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Muirhead added: 'Were I in love with Amy, which—again I thank Heaven—I am not, I should not be very jealous of this Krapatkin, even though at times it seems that he is, perhaps, the most favoured by her fancy.'

'Then why not jealous of him?' I asked, surprised and somewhat curious, for indeed I was not in the unconcerned position suggested by Muirhead's words, being jealous enough of all men that might see and hear Amy when they would, but especially, perhaps, of Krapatkin.

'Because I think he is not long for this world,' he laughed. 'I believe that, by favour of his Tsar, he will shortly leave it for a better.'

'As for that,' I said, 'I do not see that Krapatkin lies in greater danger than any other who should offend his most clement Majesty at any moment—even Amy herself, when her time comes. And that it will come and must come before we are all clear of the tiger's claws is what troubles me most of all.'

'Yes, that is true,' said Muirhead gravely, adding nothing to my comfort by his grim look and the silence which followed it.

But things happened at the palace of which good Muirhead knew nothing, and as some of these matters have since become known to me through other sources, I will here narrate them in their order.

The position at this time, as I take it, was this:

His Grace lay undecided between Maria Nagoy and Amy, inclining to Amy, save for two reasons. Of these, the one was that he was unwilling to go back upon the boastful message which he had sent to her Grace our Queen, that he would marry whom he would, and not any substitute she might choose to send him in place of his chosen bride, which had been the Lady Mary Hastings; and the second reason was that he was uncertain whether he most liked or hated the girl, for which uncertainty there was a sub-reason, which he himself knew not or perhaps preferred to ignore—namely, that he was afraid of Amy, in whom he recognised a will as strong as his own.

The Cæsarevitch—well, his position with regard to Amy is easily stated. He sighed for her, as the child sighs for the dainty placed by his parent out of reach, and of which his mother has said: 'It is not for thee, touch it not, or chastisement will follow.'

As for Alexis Nagoy, he—like his two brothers—had begun by hating Amy as his sister's rival, and therefore his own; for in

Russia the brothers-in-law of the Cæsar play a great part, receiving the best positions at Court and in the government of the realm. But gradually the admiration which Amy's person and character seemed to provoke in men, as naturally as the perfume of a flower must give pleasure to all who inhale it, had begun to overmaster the unworthier sentiment, and our good Alexis was in a fair way to lose his heart, though as yet he dare not acknowledge it to himself, far less to his brothers or to Maria. From Amy, indeed, his feelings were not hidden, though he had said no word of them. But where is the woman who recognises not the subtle indications of love even in the making, it may be, long before the victim himself is aware of his infection?

Lastly there was Krapatkin—this marvellous boyar who dared to play lion in the very lair of the tiger. Now, Krapatkin was doomed to be drawn to Amy by every fibre of his estate, corporal and mental. His fearless, independent, joyous temperament saw instantly in this maiden its natural complement. From the first moment in which he beheld the fire in her eyes as she gave the Cæsar word for his word and smart for his sting, Krapatkin recognised that he had met the woman who, or none, must satisfy his needs. He had not believed that the woman existed whom he could ever look upon as a desirable companion or friend, or that he should ever desire to mate, in the sense of taking a wife according to the laws and limitations of the Greek Church—a woman to be considered and treated as an equal, or near it. He had laughed at the idea of such companionship, making coarse jests when the matter was spoken of by his friends, who bade him see that the blood of Rurik that ran in his veins descended by legitimate channels into the veins of his children.

'Thou art the only woman, Amy Romalyn,' he told her within a week of his return from Siberia, 'upon whom I have looked more deeply than my eyes can see.'

'That is a riddle which I cannot read,' she said.

'They call me a lion,' he said, 'and in thee I recognise a lion-cub. Maybe we will mate together one day.'

'Oh !' laughed Amy, 'the Muscovish lions woo too quickly for me. Knowest thou not, Master Muscovish Lion, to what end I came to this barbarous land ?'

'To mate with a tiger, it is said,' replied Krapatkin; 'but be sure he shall not have thee, nor thou him !'

'Be not so sure, Master Lion, for indeed thou knowest less of

this matter than I myself, who am very ignorant of all that lies in the future !'

' Why, there are some things one may know. Of these, one that I know full well is this: that thou and he will never be mated, and that for many reasons, of which one—he is afraid of thee and thou of him !'

' Not I ! ' began Amy hotly, but Krapatkin continued masterfully :

' As free and without the bars of his cage thou fearest him no more than I ; but to be set in his cage with him, from which cage there is no escape, mark you, of this you would be afraid. If not, I would say to thee, *be afraid*.'

Amy laughed. ' And what of the tiger, who is also, by favour of thy wisdom, afraid of me, as I am of him ? '

' If I tell thee, thou wilt take offence with me ! '

' Tell on ; art thou not a lion full grown, and I but a lion-cub, and that a poor female one ? '

' Well, then, I say that he will in the end reject thee and take Maria Nagoy, who is a calf to thy lion, and this because he is afraid of thy tongue and of thy good spirit which underlies it. The Tsar, mark you, is a tyrant and a cruel beast, and therefore a coward. He does not love where he fears. He will end by hating thee, take my word for it ! '

' And what of thyself ? Art thou not afraid that he will end by hating thee also ? '

' He hates me already. More than once he would have rid himself of me—what of the dogs but yesterday ? That is not the only time. But he fears me more than he hates me, and he knows well that he must beware of me, for I am rich, of the blood of Rurik, and there are hundreds of boyars who hate him, as they hate the devil, and would range with me against him if I gave the word. Moreover, I have done him good service, adding kingdoms and khanates to his sceptre in Siberia. I have no fear for myself—rather let him beware ! '

' Well, and what of all this ? ' said Amy, impressed by the strength of this great boyar, and by his splendid courage and self-reliance—the one man in Muscovy who was not afraid of the Cæsar. ' What have I to do with all this ? '

' Much. The Cæsar will not have thee, nor in any case should I allow him to have thee. Neither wilt thou have him, because—'

' Because,' Amy interrupted, laughing merrily, ' because it is

not thy will that I should be the Cæsar's wife, is it not so, O master of the world we live in, and master of the wills of men and women ?'

' Ah, yes, mock me ! ' said Krapatkin, flushing a little, but gazing with no less admiration upon the mocking maiden ; ' but maybe there is truth in your jest, little lion-cub, and more of it than you think for ! '

' Nay, Mr. Very-sure,' said Amy, ' be sure of yet one more thing—there are other wills, even in Muscovy, besides thy own—ay, and other wisdom, besides this rigmarole of Tsars who would but dare not, and of maidens who stand and tremble at the doors of the tiger's cage. I end as I began—that I know little of what shall be, and thou, Master Lion, knowest less.'

' At any rate,' he laughed, ' the present is our own, and there are matters of which a man may be sure, even though he be mocked for posing as a very little prophet ! '

' Say on,' said Amy, ' if there be more wisdom to come ! '

' My wisdom shall end with one certain thing,' said Krapatkin, making as though he would clasp the girl in his great arms—' that my heart grows very soft towards thee.'

But Amy moved quickly out of his reach. ' If that is so,' she called back as she danced down the corridor, ' do not let the Cæsar know it or he will beat thee with his dubina ! '

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## CHAPTER XX.

ON a day about this time two very angry women met in the terem and quarrelled. Of these one was Maria Nagoy, the other Amy Romalyn. It is certain that Maria had just cause for resentment, for by this time, but for the Tsar's sudden desire for a foreign bride, she would already for several months have sat by his side as Tsaritsa. A second time her hopes had been dashed by Amy's rapid growth in the favour of Cæsar and her own consequent decline as an object of interest to him.

Just at the present time it had come to this: that for three days, no less, Amy had been summoned each afternoon to play at chess or to have ordinary audience with his Grace, and she not once.

Thus it was that when Amy returned on the third of these days of disappointment and anger, she was greeted by Maria, who was usually silent in her resentment, preferring to nourish her

hatred and generate her schemes of ultimate vengeance in secret, and under the cover of assumed friendliness—Amy was greeted by her this time, I say, with a storm of reproach, of angry words, and of shameful names.

Now, Amy herself was no less a prey to feelings of anger and disgust than Maria this day, having returned suddenly from the Tsar's presence in a fit of rage caused by the conduct of the Cæsar himself, who certainly merited both her anger and all the irresistible impulse of disgust and loathing for his behaviour which had drawn Amy from his presence so quickly, and in the very midst of a game of chess begun in all friendliness.

Let me digress in order to explain why Amy, like Maria, had reason for the angry passion which brought her to loggerheads with her rival in the terem.

While she played with the Tsar this day, he being at the beginning in his milder mood, the game went against her opponent, and this displeased him.

'It is not thy skill, thou witch,' said the Tsar, in half anger, 'but the magic of thy eyes.'

'I comprehend not what my eyes have to do with your Grace's discomfiture in losing the Queen!' laughed Amy.

'There is sorcery in thee,' said Ivan; 'and while I am compelled by that sorcery to gaze in thy face, I forget the game, and in a moment thou hast captured my Queen!'

'I am no witch, Tsar,' Amy laughed; 'only thy skill is not very great.'

'I say thou art a witch. As for my skill, it is great enough to defeat Boris Godunof there, who is no fool; is it not so, boyar?'

Godunof bowed, and replied that his Grace was skilled enough to discomfit all present when the desire was upon him, though at this moment it might please him to turn his eyes and his thoughts elsewhere than upon the chessboard.

'There is no choice,' said Ivan, placated; 'she is a very witch, Godunof; and as I say while I am compelled to gaze in her face by some force put forth by her, the game is forgotten, and lo! the Queen is taken!'

'It is better thus, Tsar! suddenly spake Krapatkin, in his bold, uncourtierlike voice; 'better she should take a Queen than thou! Thou hast already taken six, though not in one day.'

The Tsar glared at the speaker for a moment, but said no word. He glanced at Amy, who kept her countenance; then some-

thing possessed him to turn and look at the Cæsarevitch who sat near, and the sight of his son staring, all eyes, upon Amy's face, infuriated him. He beat the youth suddenly with the butt of his staff.

'Go from my sight, staring fool!' he cried; and the Prince rose and hurried quickly away, sobbing with pain and holding a hand to his neck where the blow struck.

'Tsar, he did no harm,' said Amy; 'it was needless severity.'

Ivan swept the chessmen from the board with an angry movement of his arm. 'Silence!' he said. 'There is punishment for witches as well as for disobedient sons!'

'I observed no disobedience,' said Amy.

The Tsar rose to his feet, about, as it seemed, to launch forth into angry words; but Krapatkin spoke before him:

'His Highness the Cæsarevitch,' he cried, 'would bear as ill as his father to see another take his Queen!'

Ivan's face seemed suddenly to wither at the words; fury paled and made haggard his cheeks, and his lips were grey as dust. He strode toward this overbold boyar and stood very close in front of him, the lion and the tiger face to face. Krapatkin moved not an inch backwards, holding the very ground he stood upon.

'Krapatkin,' said the Tsar, 'I have borne with thee very long, but I think thy days draw near to an end. Go home and pray for thy soul, for I know not yet what thy end shall be nor when, but I swear my forgiveness for thee is finished.'

'It was finished long since,' Krapatkin laughed; 'there has remained only fear, Tsar; of that thou hast plenty left for me, more than I for thee. It is foolish to threaten when thou darest not strike.'

'Thou shalt find my arm is longer than thine, *Knyaz*,' said Ivan. 'Go home, I say, and pray for thy soul.'

'Pray thou, rather, for thine; mine is not laden with the blood of a thousand murdered victims, it——'

The Tsar replied no word, but for a full minute stared in Krapatkin's eyes. Then slowly his hand rose.

The boyars present held their breath, for they feared he would strike Krapatkin to the earth with the iron-pointed *dubina* he held.

'Must I chastise thee with my own hand?' muttered the Tsar, his eyes ablaze with fury, his lips working. Krapatkin stood with a smile upon his face.

'Let the Tsar so demean himself if he will,' he said; 'what care I? This is not the end of the quarrel. The Tsar but adds to the measure of his offences, which mount up for the day of reckoning.'

Down came the hand of the Tsar, and with it the heavy staff. For a moment it seemed that he had repented of his intention of striking Krapatkin, that he had merely made a threatening demonstration by banging the spike of his dubina into the floor; but as he raised his arm a second time it was seen that Krapatkin winced; then all present observed that the spike of the Tsar's staff had transfixed his foot, and that the anguish of its withdrawal had compelled betrayal of the pain he had well concealed at the blow itself.

The red blood flowed from the wounded foot over the floor. Amy screamed aloud. Her eyes travelled quickly from the red stream to the face of the Tsar.

'See what thou has done—see!' she cried; 'thy spiked staff has stabbed his foot, Tsar; tell him quickly it was an accident, tell all these boyars: what will they think of thee, else?'

'It was no accident, fool!' said the Tsar, turning his white passion-moved face upon her; 'go quickly to thy terem, lest thou see a worse thing; this is the beginning of the end for this man—let him pray for his soul as I have warned him!'

For a moment it seemed that Amy would turn upon this devil-man and pour upon his head a storm of shameful, stinging words, such as her soul longed to hurl in his face; but two boyars—Alexis Nagoy and Boris Godunof—seized her quickly by the arms and bore her from the room before she could speak. They left her at the end of the corridor. 'Go to the terem, and return not,' said Boris, 'when he is in this mood there is death in the air.'

But Amy remained and wept awhile to save her heart, which was near a-breaking at this moment with the variety of emotions which filled it to bursting: pity, horror, even some terror, fury, disgust.

The tears did her much good, and when, half an hour later, she entered the terem there remained no trace of them, though her heart was almost as full as ever of the fierce anger and indignation which Ivan's cruelty had planted therein.

And in this mood she received the assaults of Maria Nagoy, who met her in the ante-room, among sewing-maids and the wives

of boyars, and, having for the moment lost that control over herself which usually distinguished this fair, foxy maiden, began to abuse and to scold in unfamiliar fashion.

Amy felt first astonished, then somewhat pleased, to be involved in sudden and unexpected warfare ; here was vent for the stifling fulness of her bosom, replete with indignation.

‘Here is the witch,’ cried Maria, ‘who has so blinded the Tsar with her sorceries that he can no longer discern what manner of a creature she is !’ Maria trembled and panted, and there were tears of rage in her eyes.

‘Who—I?’ said Amy, surprised. ‘What have I done that I am to be called a witch ?’

‘You have cast a spell over him for three days, during which he has not once sent for me—me, who should have been Tsaritsa to-day but for thee and thy sorceries.’

‘I have cast no spells,’ said Amy, at white heat ; ‘if the Tsar has thought better of his taste for such a thing as thee, am I therefore a witch ? Beware what thou sayest, Maria Nagoy, for I am angry this day.’

‘Curse thee and thy anger—witch that thou art—these three days thou——’

Maria’s angry speech was brought to an abrupt and remarkable end, for Amy suddenly raised her hand and administered to the astounded Maria a vigorous box on the ear, first on one side and a second time on the other.

‘If I am a witch, I am a witch,’ she said, white with fury. ‘How like you my sorceries ?’

‘The Tsar shall hear of this !’ sobbed Maria, crying now and frightened out of her life ; ‘think not he will choose a she-devil for his Tsaritsa.’

‘And why not ?’ cried Amy, laughing in loud scorn, and speaking in the recklessness of a fury which had passed beyond control. ‘Why should he not ? Is not a she-devil fit mate for a he-devil ? Better that than one who is neither hot nor cold, neither water nor wine, a thing with but half a human soul, like thee, and a body that——’

‘All this he shall hear, every word !’ sobbed Maria ; ‘then we shall see, my friend, we shall see !’

‘I will tell you what you shall see,’ said Amy, turning upon her so suddenly that Maria fell back in fear into the arms of the fat wife of Boyar Efimof, ‘you shall see the Tsar desiring one thing and the witch Amy Romalyn desiring another. But the

witch shall have her way, and—who knows—maybe you shall have yours also if the Tsar is fool enough !'

A speech which must have afforded to that terem-full of fair ladies much occupation for thought, conjecture, and heart-searchings.

## CHAPTER XXI.

RAGE and a newly kindled sentiment of fearful respect, born of the ear-boxing to which Amy had submitted her, did not diminish Maria Nagoy's determination to employ any means to defeat her foreign rival, and Amy had now—Maria believed—delivered herself and her chances of preferment into her enemy's hands.

Moreover, the foreign rival now immediately, and with characteristic indifference and independence, lent Maria another weapon to be used against her ; for when Amy presently went forth from the terem and sought the open air, Maria sent an old woman, employed by the terem ladies to take messages and so forth, to spy upon Amy, and the messenger presently returned to report that the foreigner had met me, Herbert Shadwell, evidently by appointment, and that we had walked together, talking earnestly.

'Good !' said Maria ; 'to-morrow there will be many things to tell the Tsar, and he shall hear this also. We shall see what this foreigner she-cat that strikes and scratches with her claws will gain by to-day's work.'

Maria asked for and easily obtained an audience from his Grace, to whom she recounted this and that, as much as she chose or dared to tell of Amy's words.

'Secondly she smote me with her hands,' said Maria. 'I carry the mark upon my face !'

'What have I to do with that ?' asked Ivan, glowering at Maria. 'Am I to be peacemaker between the women of the terem ?'

'I thought to serve my lord by proving how devilish a temper is concealed under the smiles and affability which this foreigner displays in the presence of the Cæsar,' said Maria. 'This is an English wild cat—'

'Enough of that,' said Ivan ; 'Amy Romalyn is not like Maria Nagoy in this : that thou, Maria, art one in the terem and another in this audience-room ; for the rest, I have seen the girl in many moods—proceed !'

'Thirdly, from the terem she went forth into the street, where

she met by appointment her lover, the long foreigner that is placed over the wolf-dogs ; with him she walked and conversed for many hours before they disappeared together, the Saints know into what secret places known to them.'

'I think thou liest, Maria Nagoy,' said Ivan, fixing the woman with his glittering eyes. 'Dost thou think I discern not the motive in this lying tale of thine ? Be assured all thy good looks shall not save thee from the knout if I find thou art deceiving me.'

'I am speaking truth of matters that I know, Tsar,' said Maria bravely, determined to gain a point over her rival. 'As for my motive, must I make a secret of that which all may know, which is my pride and my joy, my very life blood ?—namely, that I love and adore the Cæsar, who would have given to me my heart's desire ere this day but for these foreigners, and that I hope even yet to be preferred to one who has neither love nor proper reverence for Cæsar's sacred person !'

'As to that, see that thou liest not to Cæsar, lest instead of thy heart's desire thou obtain the knout only. This maiden shall confront thee.'

Maria paled a little, but she was desperate and made a show of rejoicing.

'In Heaven's name let her come !' she said ; 'we shall see whether she can deny my charge. Choose which of us thou wilt, Tsar Ivan Vassilitch, but at least thou shalt see this woman as she is.'

'Good !' said Ivan ; 'let this English tiger-cat be fetched, Godunof. Stay thou, Maria ; if she scratch thy face, it is no matter of mine, and if thou hast lied, the knout !'

Godunof himself went to summon Amy, there being no other present save the Cæsarevitch, for this was a private audience.

Amy entered presently, rosy, flushed, indignant, beautiful ; never, said Godunof, was so fair a picture of haughty, fearless beauty. No wonder that the Prince stared and changed colour, that the glitter in the Tsar's eyes grew brighter, that Maria Nagoy looked ugly by reason of the spasm of jealousy and hatred which disfigured for a moment her fair Muscovish comeliness.

'Now,' said the Tsar, 'speak ! what of this woman's tale ?'

'As yet I know not her tale !' Amy replied, smiling.

'Tell it again, Maria, and see thou neither vary nor modify it, for by thy truth thou shalt stand or fall !'

Thus warned, Maria did her best to repeat her story as she had told it, but even so the Tsar stopped her many times ; it appeared he had listened well, and missed nothing ; he would have the tale word for word.

‘So,’ said he, when Maria had finished, ‘thou hast heard, Amy ; what hast thou to say ?’

‘There is truth, and there are lies !’ she replied, scarcely deigning a glance in Maria’s direction. ‘The truth is this : that I returned yesterday from thy presence, Tsar, angry and sorry, as who should not be that saw how sadly matters went in this room ; for a maiden unaccustomed to such things, it is shocking to see blood flow and to hear—’

‘Enough,’ said the Tsar, frowning darkly ; ‘I summoned thee to refute if thou canst this woman’s charges, not to speak of other matters which concern thee not at all.’

‘I would prove, Tsar, that being, as I admit, indignant and sorry with and for thee, I had good reason for both, and that I was in no mood to be met by this Maria Nagoy with foolish reproaches and abusing. Was it my fault that I was summoned to thy presence three days, which days were spent by her in the terem ? Accuse thyself for this, Tsar !’

The Tsar glanced at Maria. ‘Let that pass,’ he said ; ‘Maria is not a saint, but a jealous woman.’

‘And I am no saint,’ Amy laughed, ‘therefore when thus angered by Maria Nagoy, I boxed her ears ; that is truth.’

‘As to blows, I care nothing whether she struck, or thou ; what of the words she has accused thee of saying ?’ Ivan’s eyes glowed like coals as he fixed them upon Amy’s face. Amy would have preferred to brave the man and cry that all she had said to Maria in her anger was the very truth of her true soul, but her heart failed her a little. This she afterwards admitted with shame and self-abasement while telling the tale to those who in turn passed it on to myself. She paused a moment. Dared she admit the very truth ?

‘Tsar, I was angry,’ she said, temporising, ‘and ashamed.’

‘And in thy anger thou saidst foolish words, is it not so ?’ said the Tsar ; ‘words which thou wouldest now unsay ?’

‘If we must be answerable for all said and done in the angriest moments,’ said Amy, ‘God help us all, thee and me also, Tsar.’

The Tsar crossed himself and bowed towards the jewelled ikon that hung in the corner of the chamber. ‘That is true,’ he said.

'If we would have God forgive us that which we have done in the hour of our passion, we must also forgive others. Words spoken foolishly under provocation, such as this woman gave thee, may be forgiven when recalled, as thou hast now recalled these.' Amy flushed deeply and would have spoken ; Ivan held up his hand.

'I have not yet finished with thee,' he said. 'There is still the third accusation of Maria—namely, that thou didst leave the terem in order to keep an appointment with a lover, the long Englishman, thy kinsman.'

'It is a lie, Tsar ; Maria, or her spy, has told the tale as she would fain believe it herself. There was no appointment. I walked alone ; the meeting was accidental.'

Maria made a show of laughing.

'Was ever woman accused,' she said, 'of such a matter that did not swear to it that she met the man without pre-pense ?'

'Well, it is my word against thy foul insinuation,' said Amy, but without looking at Maria ; 'let his Grace take whose side he will ; my conscience is at ease in this matter.'

'Then I accept thy word, Amy,' said the Tsar. 'Go back to the terem, Maria ; thou hast not lied, maybe, therefore the knout is escaped, but thou hast behaved very foolishly, and I like not that my guest in the terem be treated rudely.'

'I have not lied, Tsar Ivan !' said Maria furiously ; 'there is one who has lied ; did not I see her blush in the lying ? There is work for thy knout, though me, in justice, it may not bite !' Maria glared at her rival.

'Go quickly, Maria Nagoy,' said the Tsar ; 'the knout is not only for liars—it is also for the insolent and the disobedient.'

Maria withdrew as far as the door.

'Ask her for thyself,' she cried back from there, 'this pattern of truth and of all the virtues, ask this foreign wench if she has lied !'

The Tsar flung a furious word at the woman, his hand restlessly playing with his dubina. Maria saw and quickly vanished.

'Now,' he said, raising a face disfigured by returning anger, 'must we speak more of all this ? Thou needest but to repeat, Amy Romalyn, that thou hast spoken the truth. I am disposed to believe thy words. This meeting with thy long kinsman, it was accidental ; thou hast not lied ?'

‘Nay, that is the very truth,’ said Amy. ‘It is to our conversation in the terem that she refers, when we spoke in anger. God knows whether I have told the very truth in this, Tsar, for indeed I am not sure what is the very truth.’

‘Nevertheless the very truth I will have,’ said Ivan.

Then Amy knew that the moment had come when she must face the peril into which she had deliberately drawn herself; she had walked fearlessly by the forest edge, and at last she had met the tiger in the way.

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## CHAPTER XXII.

‘It is not that I have lied, Tsar,’ she said boldly, ‘but rather that I know not in full how much of that which I told Maria Nagoy is truth. It is true that I came from England with some thought to win for myself a great place in the world. To secure this, two things must first happen, this I knew: first that the Cæsar should approve me, and, secondly, that I should see my own happiness in such great and honourable preferment.’

‘To this I reply,’ said Ivan, frowning, ‘that the first were in itself sufficient; for if the Cæsar should approve thee the greatest happiness were already attained.’

Amy bowed and said nothing; she knew not whether it were wiser to speak or keep silence, hoping that the Tsar would understand without further speech what she must say if compelled to speak.

‘As to this you are doubtless agreed?’ the Tsar added.

‘For a Muscovish maiden, it is, I doubt not, as your Grace has shown,’ she faltered, ‘but for a foreign maiden, who has left her home and her friends in a land where are other manners, there are many things to consider before she dare assure herself that happiness lies for her in a new country and among strangers, as far from those she has loved as death itself. Even the favour of the Cæsar’—Amy paused—‘if she had it—’

‘Ay, if she had it,’ the Tsar interrupted, his eyes glittering; ‘it is not so easily gained, Amy Romalyn!’

‘I say, if she had it,’ continued Amy, flushing a little, ‘would not last unless she were able to give back to the Cæsar so much esteem and confidence and respectful affection—even though love were impossible—as would serve to keep alight his favourable regard for her.’

'If she came to him heart-free, all this would quickly follow upon the Tsar's favour,' said Ivan. 'Think not, Amy Romalyn, that because I have received thee and played with thee at chess, and smiled upon thee when thy mood has been pleasant enough to deserve so great favour, that thy end is already won. Thou art yet far from the throne of Cæsar, though nearer than when the Queen sent thee in Mary Hastings's place.'

'Her Grace assented only to my coming; the desire to take Mary's place was my own.'

'For the present it has failed, Amy, and by thy own foolishness. With more wisdom thou mightest have attained thy end.'

'Then there remains for me but to return to my own country,' said Amy, 'when I please, or rather when opportunity offers.'

'Not so; thy departure, if thou depart, shall be fixed by me. Must thou so hasten? Waits there a lover for thee in London?'

'I have no lover, Tsar! I have said that Maria lied.'

'Well, so be it; but return to England thou shalt not. I have not yet done with thee; thy position is not yet hopeless. Thy foolish words, spoken in anger to Maria Nagoy, may be forgiven. We shall see whether thou art in a state of grace; for those who repent there is forgiveness.'

'Tsar, I am in no state of grace; there is more truth in that which I said to Maria Nagoy than thou hast discerned; it is true that I fear more than I esteem thee. When Krapatkin's blood flowed, there flowed also from out of my heart all that might have made me fit to be the wife of the Cæsar, esteem, veneration; there remained only fear and shame.'

The Tsar rose suddenly from his seat; it seemed as though he would strike the girl down.

'Tsar! Tsar!' Boris Godunof began to say soothingly; but the Prince Ivan rose to his feet and interrupted him, crying aloud:

'Tsar! Tsar! remember that she is but a weak maiden and a guest of thy house!'

Ivan turned slowly towards his son. The Prince burst into tears, for doubtless, poor youth, he thought that the dubina would descend upon his head as it had descended more than once already; but the Tsar made no movement to assault him.

'Thou art right, son,' he said; 'all this I remember. Go thou now to thy own quarter—nay, I shall not hurt thee—go in peace.'

The Prince Ivan went in more than peace, for Amy sent, to go with him, so splendid a smile of gratitude that he walked all day upon winged feet.

‘Amy Romalyn,’ said the Tsar, ‘if thou hast planned thy speech this day in order to gain favour and not resentment, thou hast attained thy end. I love not to be withheld, yet thee I like the better for withstanding me. I do not blame thee that by my anger yesterday I estranged thee. I have since prayed to God, through His blessed saints, Cyril and Methodius, authors of our Faith, that I may be forgiven the sin of yielding to my passion. There is not another in this land would have dared speak as thou hast spoken this day, yet I forgive thee. Remain, I entreat thee, yet a while in my country. Let me know myself better, and know thou me better also.’

‘I will remain a while,’ said Amy; ‘though I think that which was done yesterday cannot be undone.’

‘If God can forgive, canst not thou?’

‘It is not mine to forgive,’ said Amy; ‘let Krapatkin forgive, and the Prince, the Cesarevitch!’

Ivan scowled. ‘Forget it, then,’ he said; ‘thou seest that with thyself I am different. Sit thee down at the chess-table; we will play together.’

The Tsar won the game, and with this success came a softer mood.

‘You played foolishly,’ he said laughing, ‘and without concentration; your thoughts are elsewhere. Of what were you thinking? Come, confess!’

‘I have plenty to think of,’ said Amy; ‘for Maria Nagoy and the Tsar together have given me food enough for thought.’

‘Let not thoughts of Maria worry thee—she is a jealous woman; for the tongue of a jealous woman there are no laws. Thou hast pleased me better with thy fearless truth than she with her talebearing. I am surrounded by liars and sycophants, Amy Romalyn; I weary of such.’

‘Krapatkin is neither, yet thou lovest him none too well.’

‘What knowest thou of my mind? If I loved not Krapatkin, he would have been in his grave long since. If his ill-manners enrage me, that is nothing. If I strike him, that is also nothing!’

‘If to be struck is a pledge of thy love, Tsar, I envy not the lot of thy Tsaritsa; Maria Nagoy will soon go limping!’

'I have not yet decided that she shall be Tsaritsa ; you speak foolishly ; it may yet be thyself or another—nay, look not so and shake not thy head ; thou didst not come to Moscow for any other purpose but to be chosen by me ; it is foolish to pretend otherwise.'

'To be approved and to approve,' Amy murmured.

'When the Tsar woos there is only one that speaks. To his wooing every heart must open like a flower to sunshine. Hast thou yet been wooed, Amy, in thy country ?'

'Not I, Tsar ; I love not such foolishness.'

'What ! wouldst thou not wed and become the mother of children ?'

'That shall be as God wills and as—'

'As the Tsar wills, wouldst thou say ? Well, I have not yet decided. I am not so set against thee as aforetime, yet build not too much upon that, for I will not have the Queen of England dictate to me in this matter. Mary Hastings defied her mistress and came not—tell me, Amy, has this Hastings a lover ?'

'It was not a matter of lovers, Tsar ; she is timid. It is no light matter to do as thou wouldst have had her do.'

'Yet thou hast done a harder thing—ay, a very impudent thing, Amy, when one considers it. I know not why I sent thee not away with Sir Bowes ; are there many such as he in England ? He is a bear, not a man !'

'There are few honester or braver, even in England,' said Amy, 'where there are many brave men.'

'This long fellow, now, he is honest also and brave ?'

'Oh, I have found neither dishonesty nor cowardice in him,' said Amy.

'Why must he needs stay here, to be by thee ?' the Tsar frowned.

'The Tsar has forgotten ; he was ill and unable to travel, therefore he remained.' The Tsar's anger seemed to return as he thought of poor me.

'His presence is disagreeable to me ; I like him not,' he said.

'Therefore he was given to the dogs to eat,' replied Amy ; 'I have not yet thanked thee, Tsar, for this favour to my kinsman.'

'It is an honourable appointment,' Ivan growled, 'and not so very dangerous, as he has well proved, for he is still alive. Why didst thou make an appointment with this fellow yesterday, and converse in secret with him ?'

‘The meeting was accidental ; my word as to this was accepted but now in full quittance, yet I am again accused. What have I done meanwhile to be mistrusted ? For the rest, may I not walk or talk with my own kinsman, even though it were by appointment ?’

‘We shall see what thou mayest do and mayest not do. Why dost thou so anger me, Amy Romalyn ? It is the part of a woman to calm, to soothe, to conquer ill-humour with kindness—why art thou not a woman in this ?’

‘I know not how I have offended, Tsar ; shall I return to the terem and send thee Maria Nagoy ?’

‘Yes, go, I weary of thee ; let Maria come if she will—no, stay, I will not have her. If I let thee go, promise me that thou wilt not immediately return to thy long kinsman.’

‘I promise nothing,’ said Amy hotly, ‘for the rest, I know not where to find him.’

‘At every turn thou defiest me. I know not whether I like thee or hate thee for it, but I think it will end in hate. Go ! What, dost thou laugh at me—stay !’

But Amy had fled down the corridor, having kissed her hand and laughed merrily as she departed.

The Tsar glared, frowning at the door though which Amy had passed.

‘I would and yet I would not,’ he muttered ; ‘to-day I will not, and yet it may be that to-morrow I will.’

Then his Grace summoned Boris Godunof, who sat in the recess behind Ivan’s great chair of state, and gave him an order which resulted in the arrest of poor me, Herbert Shadwell, upon a charge of which I knew nothing.

To Alexis Nagoy, whom he commissioned to arrest me, Godunof said : ‘The foreigner’s star rises fast, Alexis ; let thy sister use all her arts. This arrest is a step towards the preferment of the other.’

‘God send it be not so !’ said Alexis fervently, having—in his soul—a double reason for the wish expressed.

‘Those two would breed a race of tigers that should eat up all Muscovy !’ laughed Boris Godunof.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

THE ladies of the terem were accustomed to receive news quickly, rarely lagging much behind the rest of the world in this respect, but on the day following my arrest there reached the women's quarter of the palace three pieces of information which set the doves therein confined a-fluttering with excitement.

The first of these items was that the Tsar had yesterday finally—or as finally as the Caesar was wont to make his decisions—resolved to choose the foreigner, Amy Romalyn, for his seventh consort.

The second item contradicted the first, asserting that the Tsar's mind had been made up, indeed, but that, having quarrelled fiercely with the 'Anglichanka,' or Englishwoman, as they generally called Amy, he had determined against her, and had informed her to this effect.

The third item, which of course was true, contained the news of my imprisonment for causes unknown. The ladies were assembled at dinner at midday when Olga Shishkin, entering from an assignation in the courtyard, brought in the last two pieces of information, the first having reached the terem but a few minutes before. Amy had not as yet joined the rest at the midday meal, so that the conversation ran more freely and noisily than would have been the case if she had been present. Maria Nagoy, to whom the first item of news had brought floods of tears together with much sympathy, real or pretended, from her companions, had now dried her eyes, and sat flushed and triumphant in an ecstasy of joy. 'It may be,' she said, 'that the Anglichanka is imprisoned also, together with the big fellow she calls her kinsman; was anything said as to this, Olga? Have matters come to light with regard to the relations between these two?'

'Nothing was said,' replied Olga, 'and, so far as I have heard, nothing is suspected.'

'Nay, you speak of what you know nothing, my friend; the Tsar—who should know if not I?—made no secret of his suspicions when speaking his private mind; that is, in conversation with myself. The Anglichanka is sly, fox and tiger in one; by St. Nicholas, if she is arrested also, my Saint shall have a long candle before her ikon this very day.'

'Thy Saint must go candle-less, then,' laughed Olga, 'for I think the Anglichanka now comes.'

This was the case, for Amy entered the room next moment, her entrance being the signal for a dead silence among the assembled ladies.

Olga tittered audibly as Amy stood a moment surprised, looking from one face to another, wondering at the sudden silence.

'We talked of thee, Amy Romalyn,' said Olga. 'Thou comest as one from the grave, for Maria Nagoy has just told us of thy arrest and imprisonment.'

'I said the matter was likely,' exclaimed Maria, flushing; 'not that I knew it to have taken place.'

Amy glanced at Maria. 'I know not of any such likelihood,' she said, taking her place at the table; 'but Maria Nagoy knows many things of which the rest of the world is in ignorance, her imagination being her informant.'

'Gagarin says,' continued Olga, 'that Maria has been definitely chosen by the Tsar, and thou rejected—is this true, to thy knowledge?'

'I know not the Tsar's mind,' Amy laughed; 'dost thou, Olga, or does this Gagarin or any other? When his Grace has chosen Maria will she not be the first to be told?'

'Nay, but how much has he told thee? that is what we would know. This day we have heard two things—and a third. The first that thou art to be Tsaritsa, and the second that Maria is chosen.'

Amy laughed. 'I think the Tsar will consider yet a hundred times before he decides,' she said.

'If the second is not true, then why is thy long lover arrested and imprisoned?' cried Maria angrily, for there was about Amy an air of quiet confidence which enraged her.

Amy flushed red, and turned instantly upon the speaker.

'Beware! Nagoy,' she said; 'do not thy ears still tingle? Would they renew acquaintance with these hands? Withdraw that offending word.'

'Which word?' Maria hesitated, growing pale.

'Thou knowest—come, withdraw it quickly.'

'Well, thy long kinsman, be it then; why is he arrested if thou art not in disgrace and I preferred?'

'You lie, Maria; my kinsman is free.'

Olga now spoke:

'It has gone abroad that he is imprisoned; so Gagarin says. Maria speaks the truth in this so far as we have heard it.'

'But why, and upon what charge,' Amy cried, 'and when?' She rose from her place as though she would leave the table.

'Nay, eat thy dinner,' said Olga; 'or wilt thou go eat the Tsar instead? It is his doing that Shadwell is arrested, whose else?'

Amy said not another word; she left the room by the door which opened upon the corridor leading to the Tsar's quarter.

'She has gone to face the tiger!' said Olga laughing. 'Which will eat the other? By the Saints she is a brave one!'

'This time I pray she may be eaten quite,' said Maria Nagoy, laughing nervously. But Olga bade her be not too sure of this, for, said she, 'if Shadwell is arrested it is more likely that the Tsar is jealous than otherwise, for what other offence should the long Englishman have committed?'

'That is true,' said one or two; 'if he is jealous of the man for her sake, be sure he is not yet done with her, Maria, and thou not yet Tsaritsa!'

'We shall see, we shall see!' cried Maria; 'and if she is now arrested also and put to roost with this lover of hers, it shall be I that spoke wisdom and you foolishness.'

'Beware! Maria, and call him not her lover in the Anglichanka's presence, or thy cheeks will smart for it; the Anglichanka goes not back upon the word spoken!'

'And beware thou, Olga, how thou offendest me; for I swear that I shall yet be Tsaritsa, and I shall remember well both those who have offended and those who have stood my friends!'

Meanwhile Amy actually entered the anteroom of the Tsar uninvited, and sent a page to his Grace to demand immediate audience, which was quickly granted her, his Grace being in a placable mood.

'Is it true, Tsar, that my kinsman is arrested?' Amy asked boldly; 'if so, upon what charge?'

'Is this the object of thy audience?' Ivan said, frowning; 'if so, go back to thy quarter and mind not affairs that concern thee not.'

'My kinsman's affairs concern me much,' said Amy; 'he has done no wrong, Tsar, and that thou knowest.'

'Not so; he has done wrong; go quickly, Amy Romalyn, thou angerest me.'

'Nay, I go not until my question is answered. Upon what charge or for what offence——'

'Offence enough!' cried Ivan, with difficulty controlling his

rage, yet controlling it in part. 'Godunof, tell this minx what she would know and send her back whence she came: I will speak no more with her!'

The Tsar actually rose and left the room without glancing again in Amy's direction—a rare victory, indeed, over his passions and significant withal for those who had eyes to see.

'It is true that the Englishman is imprisoned,' said Godunof; 'God knows what the Tsar will do with him next.'

'But why? What offence hath he committed?' cried Amy; and Boris Godunof could tell her of no more serious charge than that during the scrimmage between the wolf-dogs and Krapatkin, a week ago, Herbert Shadwell had so roughly treated one hound that he had since died. 'A terrible offence, truly!' Godunof laughed; 'but for our great master any offence is serious enough if a charge is to be laid, or if there is an offender to be got rid of.'

'He will not—dare not—murder him for this!' cried Amy.

'Dare not? What is there the Tsar dares not?' said Godunof; 'as to "will not," the Tsar's will is the most unaccountable thing in the world; who knows it from this moment to that? Who can measure it, compass it, define it, understand it? Go back to the terem and pray to thy God—who is, I suppose, the same as our own—that He will protect thy kinsman. Assuredly there is no other who can!'

Amy returned to the dinner-table black as a cloud, her eyes ablaze with the wrath that consumed her. So fierce she looked that none dare speak to her. Evidently, all concluded, she had failed in her enterprise with the Tsar, whatever it may have been. Amy quickly ate a little food and retired from the chamber. Olga Shishkin followed her.

'I have won, I have won! What said I?' exclaimed Maria Nagoy. 'Saw you her face? It was the face of one who has lost hope. I wager the Tsar drove her from him!'

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#### CHAPTER XXIV.

'If the big Englishman is thy lover, Amy,' said Olga, as the two maidens reached the empty sewing-room, 'by which word I mean one who loves and is loved, I give thee all sympathy; my heart bleeds for thee.'

'He is not my lover, Olga, except that he cares for me well enough to have left home and to have stood by me here in order to protect me in case of unknown dangers ; but, even so, I should be base indeed if I could see him imprisoned and remain unmoved. He is arrested for the death of a dog, slain by him, mark you, in the saving of a man !'

Amy laughed, but tears began to come into her eyes as the laughter ended. 'Oh, Olga, advise me, what shall I do to help my friend ?'

To Olga's astonishment this proud Anglichanka suddenly burst into tears and sobbing, falling upon the girl's neck and bidding her for the love of God help her, somehow, in her need.

'Alas ! what can I do ? There is Gagarin, of course !' said Olga ; 'but he has no influence with the Tsar, who dislikes him. There is Krapatkin,' she added as suddenly, 'who is head over ears in love with thee ; he, at least, is not afraid to defy the Tsar if need be—ay, and would for thy sake, if only he——' Olga paused.

'Speak on, Olga,' said Amy ; 'it is a good thought.'

'If only he be not jealous of thy long-legged kinsman, who certainly loves even though he be not loved again.'

'Mar not thy good thought by foolish speaking,' said Amy. 'Yes, Krapatkin shall help me ; he can and he shall !'

'He will exact payment,' said Olga smiling ; 'be prepared with thy answer. He will want favours, promises, I know not what !'

'He is a brave man and has a generous heart !' said Amy. 'You Muscovish women think but lowly of your boyars, but this one at least has something noble in him ; you do the man injustice.'

'So be it—I pray it may be so. Go to his house, you know which it is—one of the greatest. It stands at the corner of the Uspensky.'

Amy was fortunate enough to find Krapatkin at home. The boyar was surprised and highly delighted to greet her, but his face darkened ominously when he learned the object of her visit.

'How should I release the fellow ?' he asked frowning ; 'and why ?'

'Life for life ; he saved thee from the dogs !' said Amy ; 'more shame to thee, if thou hast already forgotten.'

'Yes, that much is true, though I might have escaped without

him ; nevertheless he served me well. And the Tsar would have him murdered because he killed a dog, you say—'

'In saving thee. It was during that very fight.'

'The Tsar is the very prince of the devils. Nevertheless, Amy, I am jealous of this English fellow ; he loves thee ; why should I, who love thee also, save from death another who loves thee ? Surely that would be foolishness !'

'A thousand times, no ; not foolishness, but the best wisdom. Knowest thou not better than this the way to a woman's heart ? Do nobly and scorn the consequence. Set my kinsman free—he is kinsman, mark you, not lover ; he does not speak of love.'

'Nay, I think he is both,' said Krapatkin. 'This which thou wouldest have me do is to close my own way to thy heart that another may enter.'

'It is not a matter of who shall love and be loved, I say,' cried Amy angrily, 'but of saving the life of a man who has saved thine. I ask a plain service of thee ; grant my request, or I will find another who is more generous.'

'Nay, I may do thee this service or I may not. I think I shall do so ; but to be plain with thee, as thou art with me, the matter lies thus : here is a man that loves thee, therefore he is my rival.'

'So is the Tsar thy rival !' said Amy ; 'there is no doubt that his heart is now my own !'

'Is it so, indeed ? Art thou so sure of him ? What then—thou wouldest be Tsaritsa, after all ? Beware ! Amy, there are dangers even about the throne of Caesar !'

'Dangers—what matter they, when there is the strength of a lion to overcome them ?'

'Dangers from within as well as without ! Beware of the Tsar, Amy Romalyn ! he has enemies who are dangerous to him and to his, remember this. The boyars will not for ever lie under his chariot-wheels ; his new Tsaritsa shall not long sit in her high place, even though the tiger himself withheld his claws from her, which he would not !'

'Thou canst not frighten me, Krapatkin,' said Amy ; 'thy words are wasted. All this I know. If my heart had gone out to the Tsar I would gladly marry him, dangers and all, for, truth to tell, I love the power and position which, as his wife, I should enjoy, but—'

'Yes, but,' laughed Krapatkin, 'there are many *buts*.'

'Then at but let it remain, my friend, as remain it shall ;

for thee, and for thy own ear only, I will say this : I have sworn to myself that I will never be the Cæsar's wife.'

'Good, so far !' said Krapatkin, well pleased. 'And as to that long Englishman, what of him ?'

'Dear heaven !' said Amy, 'may I not wish for the saving of my own kinsman from torture and from death, and should I not first go for help to him whom this man has delivered from a dreadful end ? Shame on thee, Krapatkin—shall I go to another for assistance ? To Alexis Nagoy, who would go through the fire at a word from me ? To——'

'Go to no man, for I think none will serve thee better than I, but something I must have for my service ; be sure Nagoy would ask an equivalent first and fail in his mission afterwards. Give me a word, a hint, some little indication of the way thy thoughts are tending. A maiden's heart must incline one way or another.'

'Mine is a heart that knows not itself, Krapatkin, excepting that it has not inclined Cæsar-ward, though to be Cæsar's wife was my object in journeying to this land. Is not this enough for thee ?'

'It is much, but not enough. I ask again, what of Shadwell ?'

'He is my brother, or near it. I show him neither courtesy nor affection—ask him, if thou must, what is my bearing towards him. As for thyself——' Amy paused.

'Yes, as for myself, for that is the main point—speak on, for on thy words will depend my service.'

'Again, I say, ask Herbert Shadwell what I said of thee,' murmured Amy, lowering her lashes in a modest manner and hoping with all her heart that she might blush the while. 'My lips will not repeat it in thy presence.'

'Nay, tell me.'

'Ask Herbert, he will tell thee, and the sooner he is released the sooner thou shalt know.'

'Is this a trick ?' said Krapatkin. 'Beware ! Amy, if thou deceivest me. On the other hand, if we should one day come together, mark this and remember it well, that thou mayest even yet be Tsaritsa. This devil-Tsar Ivan will not much longer be tolerated by his boyars ; his sons will fall with him, then will follow the election of a new Tsar. I am of the Rurik blood—there are others also, but I think I am as likely at least as any to be raised to Cæsar's throne. Remember all this.'

'I will remember,' said Amy; 'though a man need not be Cæsar to please a woman.'

'Well, I will do this service for thee. Give me an earnest of my reward—let me hold thee for a minute in my arms.' The big boyar made as though he would seize and clasp the girl, but she eluded his embrace and reached the door in safety.

'First the service, then the reward,' she cried, and so the interview ended, Amy escaping without further molestation, in which matter she was more favoured than she knew, considering the character of the man she dealt with. Amy was angry, for she had given more than she intended, fearing further difficulty and complication. Nevertheless she had achieved her object, which was—Heaven bless her!—my release from a very loathsome captivity.

As for me, I lay in my filthy cell or dungeon, whose floor was covered with rank and noisome straw which had lain there rotting with pestilent odours for a year or more—lay almost heart-broken and hopeless, not so much for my own plight as for Amy's; for what would become of my beloved in the midst of the many dangers that beset her, and not a single honest English arm to protect her? My poor prayers she might have and had; but if God's will toward me was loathsome captivity, probably torture, and certainly death to follow, why should He intend more mercifully towards Amy, assuredly the chief offender in this foolish, sinful enterprise of leaving home and country, and the duties which lay where it had pleased Him to plant us, in order to seek better things in so foul and unblessed a land as this of Muscovy?

All day I had lain here in despair and sickness, begotten of the foul atmosphere and disgusting food provided for me, when—following a slight commotion without—the key turned in the lock, and in walked Krapatkin, who bade me follow him forth, quickly and in silence.

A soldier of the Streltsy lay dead or stunned at the door of my prison. Krapatkin did not so much as glance at him. It was dark, and he carried a lantern. Several soldiers were passed by us at various corners of the corridors we traversed, for my dungeon was in the Tsar's palace, but all slept or seemed to sleep. I learned afterwards that these men were every one in Krapatkin's pay, but that he had nevertheless struck down one man, him who was at the very door of my dungeon, rather than leave him to the certain vengeance of the Tsar.

Safely out and in the square of the Kremlin, I began to

express, as in duty bound, the thanks I owed to Krapatkin for my release, but he stopped me, saying :

‘ It was for no love of thee, my friend, that I have done this, though thou art a good enough fellow in thyself. Let it be understood between us that as the kinsman of Amy Romalyn I have saved thee, and as her kinsman only, serving her through thee. For reward I am to ask thee two things, to which thou art to provide truthful answers : the first, what is this lady’s bearing towards thyself ? That thou lovest her is nothing—what is her attitude towards thee ? ’

‘ If I am to say the truth and that only,’ said I, ‘ her treatment of me is none too kind ; we are kin to one another ; I am here to protect her ; for the rest I do not expect much courtesy or kindness from a kinswoman.’

‘ So far, well. Secondly, what said she to thee of me ? That she spoke kindly I do not doubt, judging from her manner in bidding me ask thee rather than say it for herself. Come, the truth ! ’

As well as I remembered I repeated Amy’s words—namely, that for his manly qualities she admired this man far beyond his fellow Muscovish boyars.

‘ And that is all ? ’ said Krapatkin.

‘ Is it not enough for thee ? ’ I replied ; it had not been the easiest of matters to tell the fellow even that much. Amy had exacted a cruel payment for my release, and I wondered why in Heaven’s name she had done so ; perhaps Krapatkin had compelled her to grant a *quid* for his *quo*. The thought enraged me.

‘ Having said this much,’ I added, ‘ and fulfilled, as I suppose, the obligation to which you submitted this lady as the condition for my release, I will say that I shall not permit thee, Krapatkin, to take advantage of information thus acquired ; it is possible that she meant nothing more than the bare words convey, which is little, and speaks not, mark you, of any sentiment deeper than the mere admiration of manly qualities.’

‘ That shall be a matter between her and myself, my friend,’ said the boyar. ‘ Think not I shall permit interference in my affairs.’

‘ So long as no man takes advantage of my kinswoman,’ said I, ‘ there shall be no interference from me ; but let her be coerced by man or devil, even to the subverting of the least of her desires, and that devil or that man shall be called to account at my sword’s point.’

‘ So be it,’ said Krapatkin. ‘ These are words that a man may understand ! ’

*(To be continued.)*

## *Adaptation of Means to Ends.*

### *THE TRAP-DOOR SPIDERS OF NEW ZEALAND.*

VICTIMS as they are of a remorseless fierceness and cunning on the part of insect families, to say nothing of the perpetual hostilities carried on against them by birds and lizards, there is a natural tendency among spiders of all kinds to shelter themselves from observation.

Of the various ways in which this self-protection is effected, unquestionably the most noticeable is that practised by the Trap-door Spider, whose mode of concealment consists in excavating a hole in the earth, the entrance to which is furnished with a self-closing lid.

These harbourages against an unkind outer world vary in depth, according to species, from one to fifteen inches, or even more, and are lined with a soft but tough web, resembling white satin. Continuing the spinning work above the surface of the ground, the ends of the silken material are next drawn out and united at the back of the tube for the formation of the hinge. This connecting band of tissue is no mere tag, folded over, but a skilfully contrived work, closely woven in a bend in such a way that when the door is raised the outer edges of the material of the hinge are opened further than the centre, and are stretched tight. Consequently the shutting of the door closely resembles the action of a spring, for, as soon as the pressure put upon the lid by the spider in passing out or going in is removed, it rebounds by its own elasticity to its former position. The hinge having been completed, the material is then spread out for the formation of the door, an elaborate piece of work composed of several layers of web alternating with as many of fine earth. Not the least perfect part of this portion of the structure is the perfect fitting of the lid, the edge of which is bevelled so as to correspond with the slightly recurved brim of the tube. So accurately does the door fall into the mouth, and close it, that the keenest sight

can detect no sign of the juncture. Still, as the little round bare patch of earth would call the eye to the nest, the spider fastens upon the exterior side such materials as necessity may require, so selected and adjusted as to produce an exact imitation of the surface of the surrounding ground. Nor is it dead matter only which she employs in this highly artistic work. On occasion she digs up growing moss, lichen, cryptogam, or even grass, and plants it with the greatest skill and judgment in the earth which forms the lid.

The geographical distribution of the Trap-door Spider is wide, the animal occurring in more or less localised areas in most tropical and sub-tropical countries. In no part of the world, however, in so small an area, do these dwellings attain such perfection or run into so much variety as in New Zealand.

In briefly describing a few only of the many interesting and striking types which have been found in this remote land I shall speak always of the female spider, as there seems no reason to suppose that the male ever assists in the making of the home.

The first example I shall give of this high order of industrial art, by means of which this lowly organised animal has transferred herself from a natural to an artificial mode of life, is the simple and somewhat shallow burrow of *Amaurobioides maritima*, which is built in the clefts and crannies of rocks by the sea. Numbers of these dwellings are at high tide exposed to the full swell of the Pacific, while none are so far removed as to be beyond the reach of spray from breakers. The lining of the tube and of the door is of leathery consistence, and apparently impervious to water.

A more curious position even than this in which to build—and which is an instance of the perfection of the instinct displayed by these animals—is that chosen by *Migas sandageri*. This spider, while constructing a tube with a trap-door in every respect resembling that of species which burrow in the ground, places her domicile on the trunk of a tree. The nest, which consists of a short tube lined thickly throughout with web, is first spun in a hollow or furrow of the bark, and then covered on its exterior side in exact imitation of its surroundings. So faithfully is the faintest variation in colour and the minutest wrinkle copied, that though the bark be held in one's hand it is impossible to detect the position of the nest. Moreover, that there may not be the slightest convexity apparent, and suspicion thereby aroused, the door is so hung that when closed it lies in the same plane with the bark. Even when the tube is spun on an even surface, as it occasionally is, there is no suggestion of abnormal prominence, for the exterior is then

made to resemble, in every part and detail, a knot of the tree. It is not difficult to understand how fatally deceptive such examples of mimicry of environment must prove to insects which alight and walk on trees.

Before leaving this little brown wonder I wish to allude to a remarkable fact—one that appears hitherto to have been overlooked by observers—which seems to me of great interest in connection with the question of the presence or absence in spiders of any special supply of nerves, or any organ which could be supposed to serve for the perception of odours. Although not exclusively selecting *Coprosma*, this tree is more often chosen by this spider than any other as a site for her dwelling. Now, *Coprosma* is so named from its extremely unpleasant smell—a particular odour which is specially attractive to flies and beetles, the two insects on which *Migas sandageri* chiefly subsists.

Although we must be extremely cautious in attributing to an animal so low in the scale of nature as the spider mental faculties the same in kind as those which in ourselves we call rational, this fact would certainly seem to imply not merely possession of the sense of smell, but also of the higher capacities of the intellect.

Differing from all known types, and elaborate to a degree probably unique, is the burrow of *Arbanitis Huttonii*. As I have not seen this nest myself, I am drawing upon the notes of Mr. P. Goyen, a gentleman who has contributed largely to our knowledge of New Zealand spiders, for a description of the structure :

‘ Its nest is of the branched type, but without a door or any sort of cover to the entrance of the main tube. The branch is smaller than the main tube, makes with the latter a more or less acute angle, and extends to the surface of the ground, where it is completely covered with particles of soil and other material, bound loosely together with web, and attached to the lining of the tube in such a way as to form a rude sort of lid, which, both as to form and colour, is on its exterior side so absolutely perfect an imitation of its surroundings that it is impossible to discover the mouth of the tube without disturbing the surface of the ground. The mouth of the main tube is very conspicuous, and seems designed to invite the entrance of the animals upon which its fabricator preys. . . . When the entrance of the main tube is disturbed, the spider, regarding this as the signal for the entrance of its prey (beetles) or an enemy, immediately betakes itself to the branch tube, and from this vantage ground attacks its prey or its enemy, as the case may be, in flank while it is passing, or in rear when it has passed, the

branch. In such a position its advantage over an intruding animal is obviously very great ; and, as I take it, very few animals capable of entering the tube could be successful against an enemy so advantageously posted. Should, however, the intruder prove more than a match for the occupant, the latter would still enjoy a position of comparative security. The intruder could not attack it without turning in the nest—a matter of some difficulty. The branch tube is always narrower than the main tube, and therefore more difficult to enter ; and finally, the spider is able to back up the branch, and, if hard pressed, to push aside the loose cover, and thus effect its escape.

‘ From the behaviour of the spiders I have captured, I have no doubt that this is the correct interpretation of the design of the nest. The whole contrivance is most ingenious, and affords another striking example among the lower animals of what strongly resembles man’s reasoned adaptations of means to ends.’<sup>1</sup>

We now come to *Nemesia Gilliesii*, the first-discovered, the best-known, and by far the most numerous of all New Zealand Trap-door Spiders. The nests of this species are found in every intermediate position between the almost naked summits of hills and the deep alluvial deposits of plains. The doors face all points of the compass, and the occupants appear to be as much at home in damp and shady places as in dry and sunny spots. The tubes, which are about an inch in diameter and of varying depth, sometimes go straight down into the earth, though by far the greater number are more or less sinuous and bend in all directions.

A single burrow, without any complexity, save occasionally a circular enlargement at one part, in which is suspended the glossy ball which holds the eggs, is the ordinary rule. As there is one recorded instance,<sup>2</sup> however, of a ‘double-door branched nest’ having been found, I think we are justified in concluding that this type will yet be met with in New Zealand in numbers. Before this discovery it was supposed that this remarkable development of industrial skill under hostile influences occurred only in the South of Europe. The nest, which otherwise is similar in construction to the ordinary burrow of *Nemesia*, is branched, the branch starting at a point a few inches below the trap-door, and, running upwards at an acute angle with the main tube, terminating blindly just below the surface of the soil. At the apex of the angle formed by the bifurcation of the tube is suspended a second door, hung in such a way that it can either be pushed upwards so as to block

<sup>1</sup> *Trans. N.Z. Inst.* vol. xxiv. p. 256.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* vol. viii. p. 260.

the main tube—giving it a false bottom, as it were—or be drawn back so as to close the entrance to the branch. Fitting accurately in both cases, and being overlaid with silk similar to the lining of the nest, this valve-like trap when shut is not discernible from the rest of the tube. It is also worthy of note that it has a handle, or flap, attached to the bottom, for more convenient use by the spider.

Let me illustrate the application of this ingenious contrivance, so simple in construction and yet so effective for all the purposes for which it is designed.

Of the natural enemies the spider has to fear, by far the most terrible is the 'Black Spider-wasp' (*Pompilus*), which paralyses, but does not kill, its victim by the injection of some poison from its body, and, carrying her off, plasters her up in an egg-cell to furnish in the future living food for the larva which the wasp itself is never to see. Let us suppose this dreaded enemy has detected a trap-door, and laid siege to the nest. Instantly the occupant, with that high appreciation of mechanical appliances to which spiders attain, rushes to the entrance, and fixing her claws and mandibles in the tough web which lines the under-surface of the door, forcibly holds it shut. If, in the tussle which ensues, the fiery insect prove victorious, the spider at once hastens behind the hanging flap, or second door, and pushes it across the main tube, hoping that it will be mistaken for the bottom of the nest. Now let us suppose, still further, that the wasp, following in hot haste, has detected the manœuvre, and, savagely assaulting again, has forced the spider to abandon this second barrier of defence. What happens? With the rapidity of thought, door and spider are gone, and the tube is innocent of a sign of them. The wasp, in rich anticipation, hurries downward, only to find the nest empty. After running up and down in frantic but fruitless search, it betakes itself off in a buzz of angry disappointment. Meanwhile what has become of the brave little defender of her home? She has darted into the branch, and, drawing up behind her the hanging door, lies safely hidden in her secret chamber.

In the case of the simple tube these assaults do not always end bloodlessly, and many a little tragedy takes place in the gloom of these subterranean abodes. Indeed, although advancing legions of imported birds are, doubtless, mainly answerable for the alarming diminution of spiders in New Zealand, the rapid increase of an introduced species of *Pompilus* does not tend towards their preservation.

With the exception of one species of *Nemesia*, the Trap-door Spiders which so far have been discovered in New Zealand are very constant in building a plain door—known as the ‘wafer door’—without any complication. In the exception to which I refer the lid is supplemented by an appendage which, remarkable though the fact is, the spider unquestionably forms for the purpose which it no less unquestionably serves. To the heel of the door, on the outside, is added a stiff spur, which, acting as a check against the ground, not only assists the mechanism of the hinge in offering increased resistance to every attempt to force open the door beyond the distance required by the necessities of the owner, but also aids materially in the spring with which it shuts.

Commendable as caution is in matters of this kind, one feels impelled to say that such contrivances as this and the hanging flap in the ‘double-door branched nest’ can owe their origin only to a faculty akin to, if not identical with, human reason.

This, perhaps, is as fitting a place as any other to mention the curious fact that sometimes a burrow is found with the door securely fastened with web on the inside, and plastered over on the outside with a coating of clay or soil, and yet with the spider alive within. It was Mr. R. Gillies, the discoverer of the Trap-door Spider in New Zealand, who first drew attention to this strange occurrence, though he admitted at once that it was to him totally inexplicable. As no one, as far as I am aware, has yet solved the problem, I take this opportunity of expressing what I believe to be a highly probable explanation.

When young, spiders appear to experience little or no difficulty in moulting, but after they have arrived at maturity each successive moult becomes more and more difficult, until, in extreme old age, the rejection of the skin is accompanied by a period of great feebleness and exhaustion, resulting not infrequently in death. Accordingly, with the knowledge that the cares of moulting are upon her, and with the knowledge also that owing to her infirmity she is at the mercy of her enemies—and of her friends, too, for the matter of that, for it is well known that all wild animals have a hatred of what is abnormal, and will attack and destroy any member of their own species which begins to show signs of disease or decay—the aged spider, in the dumb hope perhaps that in the seclusion of her chamber she will safely pass through the critical period of her illness, fastens the door upon herself and sinks to the bottom of the nest. Should she happily recover, she cuts the threads, eats her way through the plaster, and resumes her regular mode of

life. Should, however, a more grievous ending occur, then that which was her dwelling becomes her grave.

But the deeper question still remains, How does the door become sealed on the outside with clay? The hypothesis of accidental covering up by rain-wash, or some similar cause, must be at once set aside. No one who has seen one of these sealed-up nests *in situ* can entertain the slightest doubt on that point. It must, therefore, be due to the sympathetic help of another spider. That voluntary co-operator I believe to be the male. I am here, of course, in the region of conjecture, but if my surmise be correct the fact deserves, for two reasons, to be considered one of the most remarkable signs of sympathy to be found in animal psychology. Firstly, because, as the weakling husband in conducting his amours has to incur a large amount of personal danger at the hands, so to speak, of his proportionally gigantic spouse, his must be a very forgiving disposition; and, secondly, because spiders have no highly organised habits, and manifest few emotions of an altruistic character.

If I say little with reference to the capacity of *Nemesia* to vary the construction of her burrow in accordance with the changes of situation, it is because space, and not material, is wanting; for the facts of interest in this connection are numerous, and afford conclusive evidence that the work of this little engineer is not the result of blind instinct but of thought and reflection evoked by necessity. Instead of each species adhering to its own special type of architecture, as would be the case if the spider worked according to a perfectly instinctive and unchangeable plan, the variations and irregularities in the construction of the nest are manifold. The nature of the soil and the existing condition of the surface around have everything to do with the type of nest. Another highly interesting fact is that upon perceiving new relations, which could not have been objects of previous experience to her ancestors, or have occurred even in the life-history of the individual, she manifests individual and peculiar adaptive movements to meet the exigencies of such novel and peculiar circumstances. It will therefore be seen that in the ability on the part of each individual spider to estimate the conditions under which she is about to pursue her work we have to consider a totally different case from that of the operation of pure instinct, however much latitude we are inclined to allow to the word 'instinct.'

Although I am but skimming the surface of the subject—for adequately to treat of even the little we know of the habits and life-history of the Trap-door Spider a volume would be required—

there is one domestic trait in the character of this little householder which is too singular to be passed over without notice. I advert to the extreme reluctance she evinces to abandon her home. Taking upon herself the cares of household duties almost in the first days of her babyhood, she leaves the maternal roof and constructs a dwelling for herself, displaying in every detail, even in the first attempt, as consummate skill in its fabrication as the most experienced matron. As her body increases in size, she enlarges from time to time the dimensions of the tube, and of the door; but in that nest which she constructed when so young and weak she enjoys the evening of her life. Remove the lid as often as you may, and she will replace it by another; damage the nest as you will, and she will repair it, clinging to her life-long home with a pertinacity which is I believe without a parallel in nature.

I now pass on to what is to my mind the most interesting fact connected with the industry of the Trap-door Spider. I refer to the very artificial means which she employs for the prevention of the discovery of her nest.

Henry C. McCook, in dealing with this subject,<sup>1</sup> expresses the opinion that the simple instinct to cover in the door, and so to protect the artificer from exposure to weather and enemies, seems to be the dominant motive, and that the spider takes the first available material in the immediate vicinage, and that no purpose appears in the act to select such material as would disguise the nest. In other words, a sense of security by means of sheltering barriers dominates the spider's mind, and security by means of mimetic harmony or protective resemblance appears to have no place at all.

Since first I read that passage my mind has never turned to this subject without wondering why it was written.

Some years ago, in Otago, when running the level over an open piece of ground, I noticed a clue—the secret of which had been imparted to me a few evenings before by Mr. Gillies—whereby the presence of a burrow may be detected. My mind at that time being full of the subject of the Trap-door Spider and her work, I began at once to look for the door. In spite of the most careful search my efforts were unavailing, and I was about to give up the quest when my eye was attracted to a small round patch which seemed to be engaged in a peculiar sucking motion. The spider, disturbed at my approach, had rushed to the surface, and was tugging at the door to keep it shut. As I knelt there, examining the nest, I was joined by one of the chain-men. After regarding it

<sup>1</sup> *American Spiders and their Spinning Work*, vol. ii. p. 354.

for some time in silence, he said, 'Looks as if he'd thought it out, doesn't it?' Simply, the spider had. The soil at that spot was clay, hard and baked, and the cunning little deceiver, with the deliberate intention of drawing attention from the nest, had made the mouth to simulate a crack in the ground. What made the concealment more complete was the crafty way in which the crack was continued beyond the lid into the ground itself. Even though I knew the door was there, its exact position, when closed, defied detection.

I might give many other instances, which have come under my personal observation, where the nests were so skilfully concealed as to defeat every search for them, and which never would have been discovered in any other way than by accident, but I prefer that you should hear some statements which stand upon the authority of well-known observers.

Mr. Gillies, in summarising his careful and continued observations on the various modes of concealment and the deceit intentionally practised, writes: 'There are endless varieties of ways in which it is effected, and the materials used are as numerous as nature or accident has provided in the neighbourhood. In some, simplicity is the principle depended upon by the cunning artificer; in others, bold imitation of prominent and noticeable features of the surface landscape is made to do duty as a skilful and adroit piece of deception. But in all the evidence of thought, ingenuity, and reason are displayed in the selection of the particular materials used in special places, in the calculation of the probabilities of certain contingencies happening, and in the apparently careless arrangement of both living and dead matter, so as to make what is in reality the highest art appear to be the result of natural and ordinary circumstances.'<sup>1</sup>

As showing how observant these animals are of peculiarities of situation, and of their power of exact imitation, I cannot do better than again quote Mr. Gillies. One of the many specially deceptive nests which he describes was situated under the line of drip from a stable roof. This roof was covered with wooden shingles which had been curled up at the sides by the action of the sun, causing the water to fall from a row of spouts, as it were, and being thus concentrated to make a succession of holes in the ground. A Trap-door Spider, observing this row of holes, added another, at its proper distance, at the corner of, and beyond the drip from, the building.

<sup>1</sup> *Trans. N.Z. Inst.* vol. viii. p. 236.

For the purpose of brevity I have presented the description of the position of the nest in my own words. The concluding paragraph I quote verbatim :

‘ So complete was the deception that, though I and others must have seen this hole scores of times during a course of years, being in a much-frequented and prominent position, we never thought it was anything else than a rain-drip hole, and it was not till the accident of my having dropped something at the spot led me to examine the hole narrowly, that I discovered it was in reality a Trap-door Spider’s nest. With reluctance I refrain from commenting upon what this marvellous piece of deception teaches us. The simplicity and prominence of its mode of construction were the very perfection of concealment.’<sup>1</sup>

Hear also the tribute which the Rev. O. Picard-Cambridge, the highest authority to whom reference can be made, has paid to the artistic work of these little conjurers.

In describing two nests which were found on the ‘ Kaffir Boom ’ tree in South Africa, and which were forwarded to him for his judgment and determination—nests, be it understood, not one whit better concealed than those of *Migas sandageri*, the New Zealand species to which I drew your particular attention—he says : ‘ I had to search very minutely for ten minutes, and test every part of the pieces of bark sent to me with the point of a needle, to find out the lids of the nest.’<sup>2</sup>

It is, indeed, impossible without actual inspection of these nests on the ground to realise the skill with which the entrance to the burrow is disguised. Nor are two doors ever alike. Each has some well-marked distinction of its own. But whether it be some such bold stroke of deception as the weaving of a twig or a leaf across the mouth of the nest, or the peppering the door with the finest particles of sand, or the planting of growing matter on the lid, the result is always the same—a masterpiece of deception which human skill could not attempt to rival.

As confirmatory proof, if any were needed, of the excessive caution which the spider manifests in preserving the secret of her dwelling-place, I may mention that in excavating the tube she is at great pains to remove from the neighbourhood every particle of earth, in order that there may be no external indication of the whereabouts of her abode. The labour this precautionary measure entails is enormous, for the excavated soil is moulded into pellets

<sup>1</sup> *Trans. N.Z. Inst.* vol. viii. p. 238.

<sup>2</sup> *Proc. Zoo. Soc.* 1889, p. 42.

of extreme minuteness, every one of which has to be carried separately to the surface, and thereafter deposited on the comparatively distant refuse heap.

But even these elaborate precautions against surprise and capture fail to satisfy the prudence of our little friend.

Whether she spins at night before her door a few straggling lines as a snare, or patiently waits the dark hours through beneath the partially raised lid to take curious wayfaring insects as they pass—and she obtains her food-supplies in both ways—there are never when the day breaks any web, or fragments of insects, to be seen about her door. Before the prying eyes of her enemies are abroad all signs of the night's work have been removed.

In support of his contention that the selection of the material which is placed upon the lid is not the result of intelligent choice, McCook adduces as evidence the fact that sometimes a trap-door is found with the transplanted grass dead upon it—a circumstance which, he states, tends to make the site of the mouth conspicuous.

It is true one does occasionally meet with cases of this description, though they are never conspicuously abundant, the grass as a rule growing on the lid as vigorously as that in the surrounding ground. It is simply a question of the state of the weather at the time of transplanting. To assume that if the spider really did work otherwise than automatically there would be no instance of withered grass upon the lid would mean nothing else than attributing to this despised animal a meteorological foresight we are not warranted in claiming for ourselves. Moreover, looking at the question in another light, we must remember that in the substitution of English grasses for natural surface covering the spider is robbed of full liberty of choice in her selection, and, however well-intentioned she may be, has to 'make shift' with materials which perhaps she would otherwise reject.

That she is well able, however, to perceive new relations, and suitably to act upon the result of her perceptions, I may cite as proof the case of a tussock-clad hill being swept by fire for the first time probably for immemorial centuries. Then, when the billow of flame has rolled away, and the scorched door has been replaced by a new one, the spider, on the spur of the moment as it were, alters her mode and materials of concealment to suit the altered conditions in which she finds herself placed. Moreover—and here we have evidence sufficient to place beyond all question the fact that the spider does not 'take the first available material,' but that she acts with reflection and judgment—the work of mimetic resem-

blance under these novel conditions lacks none of its usual elegance and finish.

Although observations seem to show that spiders do not see, or see very imperfectly—to the tips of their feet are the extent of vision we believe them to possess—I have often thought when examining these nests that they must enjoy with us the perception of colours. I am, at least, on safe ground in affirming that examples of perfect coloration, in cases where a more clumsy arrangement would hardly fail to draw attention to the nest, are of too frequent occurrence to admit of our attributing the result to accident. I never had at one and the same time the leisure and the opportunity to satisfy myself on this point—the question might be easily settled by hooding the eyes of a spider—but I believe future observations will justify this conclusion.

Another thing which induces me to believe that these animals see much better than we suppose is the unfaltering way in which, when alarmed, they rush direct to their doors.

As the enemies *Nemesia* most dreads are diurnal, one sees little of her in the daytime. Still, she may be occasionally met with abroad when the sun shines—though what brings her forth from behind her sheltering bars at that hour, when the crouching way in which she runs is plainly indicative of dread of discovery, is a secret known only to herself. When so surprised, though she may be some little distance from home, she makes straight for her nest, lifts the lid in some way too quick for the eye to follow, and is gone in an instant. How much, in so regaining her nest, her general sense of direction is supplemented by observation of particular objects it is impossible to say, but that it is so supplemented I cannot, after watching her on several occasions, entertain the slightest doubt; unless, indeed, this and the artistic finish of the work are due to the possession of some higher sense of which we are not cognisant.

Returning to the subject of the withered grass in Vol. III., page 52, of his great work on spiders, McCook says, somewhat hotly, I think: 'I have considered at some length, Vol. II., pages 354, 355, the point thus raised . . . and its relation to so called mimicry of environment. I need only add here that one can hardly be asked to consider protection against human intelligence as a factor in the action of a spider's mind.'

This view cannot stand without question.

In the first place, I may remark that, as it is highly improbable this strange constructive faculty could have arisen in more than

one line of descent, the occurrence of the Trap-door Spider in such widely sundered areas, isolated by oceans, as, say, New Zealand and Jamaica, justifies the conclusion that it must be of enormous antiquity. Considering, then, the immense number of ages during which man and this spider have lived in immediate nearness to one another, it is surely remarkable that the middle year of the eighteenth century had gone by before any mention of a trap-door nest was placed on record. The earliest reference to it is dated 1756, and is made by Patrick Browne in his *Civil and Natural History of Jamaica*.

More than that, the nineteenth century had dawned before it was discovered that these spiders occurred in Europe—and it must not be forgotten that they literally swarm in certain localities on the shores and in the islands of the Mediterranean.

So far as I have been able to trace, the first occasion on which public mention of them was made in this country was at a meeting of the British Association at Bath in 1864.

Whether the natives of the New World knew of them or not, before Patrick Browne's discovery, it is now impossible to say. In this connection, however, it is interesting to note that they were not brought to the notice of Darwin when he visited South America; and there, as we now know, these habitations attain to an extraordinary degree of perfection. From personal knowledge I have no hesitation in saying that the Maoris had no idea of their existence until they were pointed out to them by Europeans. The Kaffirs, too, I understand, when shown these nests viewed them with curiosity, as something altogether unknown to them.

And the classical writers of antiquity—men who must have trodden on these doors times out of number—what of them? Keen and accurate observers as they were, they are silent on the subject.

Neither could Solomon have known of their existence. If he had, he would surely have mentioned them in Proverbs xxx.

To go back still further. Considering that they must be allowed to rank first among Nature's architects, what explanation is there, other than that they were unknown to man, to account for their not figuring in Hindoo tradition, Buddhist legend, or Sanscrit fable?

Truly, with all deference to so great an authority as McCook, it seems fair to conclude that these wily little artificers have been at least as successful in concealing themselves from 'human intelligence' as from their natural enemies.

When we take into account the fact that this remarkable

industry is beyond doubt the most astonishing product of instinct that is presented in the animal kingdom, it is strange, when once it did become known to us, that it should have claimed so small a share of the attention of naturalists. So little, indeed, has the Trap-door Spider been studied that there is not one species, not even the commonest, with the life-history of which we can say we are more than slightly acquainted.

I envy the man who has the means and time at his disposal to devote to the study of this subject. In the first place, it is safe to affirm—as recent discoveries in China and elsewhere prove—that many new types of nest, possibly more wonderful in complexity and superior in beauty of workmanship to any at present known to us, remain to be detected; while, in the second place, a fruitful field of inquiry and experiment lies open to him in the study of the instincts and intelligence of those species already known, the result of which may possibly enable him to give us a clue to the use and purpose of those complex structures, richly supplied with nerves, which we find in these little bodies, but the functions of which we are at present powerless to explain. That they are organs of sense can scarcely be doubted. That they are organs of some higher sense of which we have no conception is not improbable.

These are questions which await solution, and to my mind no subject of scientific inquiry can present a higher degree of interest.

JAMES BUCKLAND.

## *Pollard's Proposals.*

FOR nearly seven years Sam Pollard had been bailiff to Mr. Troughton. To all intents and purposes he was absolute master of the farm he supervised, for he could engage or dismiss a man without consulting anyone, and in all matters relating to buying and selling his master placed in him the most implicit trust. Mr. Troughton lived and farmed in an adjacent county, and frequently a month or more elapsed between his visits to High Trees, as his Essex homestead was called.

Before Pollard had been a week installed at High Trees, the labourers found out they had got a man over them who was not to be imposed on. He knew to a nicety how much work each farm servant should do for a day's wages ; and from the head horseman down to the small boy who, from six in the morning to six at night, turned the handle of a turnip-cutter, and fed Mr. Troughton's fat bullocks, each individual on the farm was made to feel that that amount of work was expected of him, and no neglect of duty would be overlooked.

Pollard lived the life of a recluse. His company was not sought, neither did he seek the company of others. At the various markets he attended he was known as a hard nut to crack ; yet his opinions were in demand, his advice listened to, and his judgment considered final in the settling of a dispute ; and many a bargain was left in abeyance till one or other of the contracting parties had got Sam Pollard to step across the market and give his opinion on the price asked or offered for the animal under consideration. He had the reputation of being absolutely straight ; and though he drove hard bargains for his master, the buyer, even if he paid more than he had reckoned to pay, had the satisfaction of knowing that what Pollard had said of the animal would prove true in every particular, and a beast of Mr. Troughton's grazing was generally considered well worth the money spent on it.

Once upon a time High Trees had been a house of some import-

ance. It was a long, low building, with gables at each end ; and in the good old days of long ago many a farmer had ridden up to the large green-painted door, whose threshold, once passed, was seldom left without much refreshing of the inner man. But now the front door was rarely opened. If, by chance, occasion required it, there was much squeaking of locks, pulling of bolts, and kicking of iron-toed boots within and without before the massive portal consented to unclose. The fact was that Pollard, though he had permission to occupy the best rooms in the house, and go in and out by the green-painted door, preferred to live in the inner kitchen, and scrape his boots on the wide iron rasper that stood by the back door.

Being a man of frugal habits and few wants, the kitchen—the best kitchen, he termed it, so as not to confuse it with the large, barn-like structure known as the back kitchen, from which access was gained to his room by the ascent of four wide brick steps—sufficed for all his wants when indoors. It was but meagrely furnished ; a table, two wooden chairs, a chintz-covered lug chair in the corner by the fire, and a lock-up desk on four legs were Pollard's sole possessions in the way of furniture. Three or four plates, a couple of dishes, a mug or two, and a frying-pan and saucepan looked forlorn on the wide shelves that ran round the back kitchen, and bespoke sparing, if not parsimonious, habits in their possessor.

Needless to say, Pollard was a bachelor. Life and heart and soul he had put into the earth he tilled, and the idea of taking or even looking out for a wife had never crossed his brain. For him women existed on this world as some kind of plant he had neither time nor inclination to cultivate. There was little about him to attract a woman. His whole appearance was unprepossessing. The head looked like the unfinished work of some sculptor, so rough and angular were the features. The eyes were deep sunk, and the hollows of the sockets were made more conspicuous by the height of the cheek-bones. The limbs were remarkable for their length and size of bone, which made the man's movements clumsy and ungainly. Save for the love of his work and the brain-power needed to extract from the soil her last quota of fruitfulness, his mind was as unfinished as his body. Books he had none, except his ledgers, which he kept with care. They and a treatise on horse-breeding, one or two works on cattle-diseases, and the weekly paper of the neighbourhood sufficed for his amusement indoors as the kitchen and top attic sufficed for his bodily wants. The other rooms in the old farmhouse served as storing-places for bags of

clover-seed, samples of barley, neatly tied up in small black bags, piles of new sacks, hanks of twine, spare pieces of machinery, and the forbidding-looking mixtures he used on his sheep and horses and beasts.

Mr. Troughton's visits were invariably hurried ones, paid in the interval between the arrival of one train and the departure of another, and consisted of a walk round the farm to look at the crops while Pollard recounted the profits and losses of the various sales made since his master's last visit. But, one afternoon, stress of weather drove the farmer indoors for shelter. Pollard took him into the empty dining-room to show him a sample of barley from yesterday's threshing. The sight of the empty room, with its old carved mantelpiece and oak-raftered ceiling, brought back to Troughton memories of his boyhood days, when his father had lived in the old farmhouse, and he tried to replace tables and chairs in the positions that dim recollections gave them. Yet it was all so long ago that he could but vaguely assign to each piece of furniture its appointed place. Besides, he was nervous to-day; from time to time he looked anxiously at the eager, rugged face bending over the sample in the outstretched palm, and instead of saying the words he had come to say, he complimented Pollard on the barley, expressed an opinion as to the price it should make at the next market, and, leaving the man to tie up the sample, wandered through the house.

As he entered each musty and unaired room a different scent assailed his nostrils. The drawing-room floor was given over to the storing of onions, and they lay so thick that it was impossible to step to the middle of the room without treading on them. Newspapers full of onion-seed lay all round the broad seat of the diamond-paned window. Another room had apples—sound and rotten, the rotting ones dissolving into brown, mouldy patches staining the floor, and the air of the room was charged with their evil odour.

A sense of pity came over its owner, as he moved from room to room, that so good a house should have fallen on such evil days, and be now nothing but a storehouse for the fruits of field and garden. It braced him for the task that had yet to be accomplished. In his mind he had already repapered and repainted the old home and restored to it its ancient glories. His tour of inspection over, he returned to the comfortless kitchen, where he found the bailiff at his desk, deep in accounts, with piles of silver and gold, ready for the week's wages, arranged round the inkstand.

'Pollard,' said his master, warming himself at the fire, 'I wonder

you don't make yourself more comfortable here, and live in one or two of the better rooms.'

Pollard turned and looked with astonishment at the speaker.

'I reckon this here kitchen meet all my wants and requirements, sir,' he said. 'I ain't much of a man ter set indoors. 'Taint often I be druv in by th' weather, I can tell yer. No, sir, a room ter lay and sleep in, and a kitchen ter get my scrap o' wittals in is all I wants. There might be a score more rooms in th' old house, and 'twould be all th' same ter me. Not as how I don't find some on 'em very convenient for dryin' my seeds and storin' th' samples in. Yes, they dew come handy for that,' he added.

'Still, there are granaries on the farm which would answer the purpose,' Mr. Troughton answered. 'I have been thinking of making a change,' he went on hesitatingly. 'My lease is out where I live, or will be in a few months, and I am sick of farming other people's land. I am going to give it up. I think I shall take chambers in London, and run down here when I like—week-ends or, perhaps, for longer at times.'

Pollard, interested, remarked that the change would be to his liking, as the more he saw of his master the better it would please him. The tone of pleasure in his voice showed that the sentiment was genuine.

'Yes, I was thinking about it the other day,' went on Mr. Troughton, 'and since I have looked over the house, I more and more consider the plan a good one. I have made up my mind to do up all the rooms, and furnish one or two for myself. So you'll have to clear out all your seeds and apples, and keep them in their proper places.'

'Certainly, sir,' Pollard replied. 'I only put 'em in cos th' rooms wor empty, and they wor handy ter get at like.'

'But the question is,' went on Mr. Troughton, 'how am I to live here? I can't have the trouble of servants; besides, they would be getting into mischief when I was away and they had nothing to do.'

'I'm quite of yar opinion, sir. Women is all very well for them as likes 'em, but yer never knows what they be agoing ter get inter their silly heads next. They give a lot o' trouble ter anyone as ha' th' seeing arter 'em. I finds I can get along without 'em. That's why I does for myself. I just ha' th' Wider Bonsor ter come and give my kitchen a scrub up once a week when she dew th' church Saturdays. She cooks me a joint as lasts me most of th' week, and th' rest of th' time I heats a bit o' wittals for myself.'

'Yes, yes, that's all very well in its way,' said Mr. Troughton impatiently, 'but that would not suit me. Pollard—I was thinking—if you got married to some nice, steady-going woman, why, that would solve the difficulty ; you would live more comfortably, and I should know that I could run down when I felt inclined, and should find things all ready for me.'

'Me get married, sir !' replied Pollard, opening his eyes in astonishment. 'Why, whoever heard tell o' sich a thing ? First, no woman would ever marry me, and, 'nother thing, I would never marry no woman. Shouldn't know how ter set about it, that I shouldn't. 'Twouldn't dew, sir, nohow. As 'tis, I can only just find time ter see arter th' farm ; if I added a wife ter my other jobs, I should sune be in a sorry plight.'

'Nonsense, Pollard, I am not joking. You are no different from other men, and I should think there are plenty of girls round here who would be only too glad of the chance of marrying you. You are a capital fellow, and have my interest at heart as regards the farm. I should be sorry to part with you, but I have given this plan of mine a lot of consideration, and it ends in this : I must have a married man at High Trees. I shall be here so much more now that I could do with a less good farmer than you are, provided he had a wife who could cook and look after the house. At the same time, if you get married, we can go on as we have done. I sha'n't hurry you, but you ought to be able to fix yourself up in six months' time ; so if you want to stop, you had better set about looking out. Tell the man to put my mare in ; I must get to the station in spite of the weather.'

Pollard, open-mouthed and dumb with astonishment, mechanically ordered the cart to be got ready, and in a few minutes his master was tucking himself into his rug. 'Let me know in a month or two how you get on,' he said, as he walked his mare out of the yard. 'See if you can't fix yourself up somehow, even if it's only to oblige me.' The cart turned into the road, and with a farewell jerk of his whip Mr. Troughton disappeared from view.

'Well, there,' said Pollard aloud, as he returned to his kitchen. 'Fix myself up, even if only ter oblige him. I allus put Master Troughton down as a man who had his head screwed on th' right way ; but either he is took ill in th' top storey sudden-like, or else he ain't narthen like th' man I reckoned he wor. Me get married—that's th' last thing I ever 'tends dewen' of. Whatever dew he take me for ?' And, although annoyed, Pollard could not help breaking into a laugh at the absurd situation he found himself in.

As the weeks went by Pollard did his best to efface from his mind all memory of what he called his master's mad idea. He almost succeeded—but not quite. From time to time the thought would present itself that, as Mr. Troughton was an impulsive man, he might, perhaps, in a moment of irritation at finding no attempt had been made to comply with his wishes, give his bailiff notice to quit. He tried to dismiss the notion as too improbable to be worth entertaining; yet as he walked the farm he walked it in the company of an apprehension that could not be set aside.

The confidence his master placed in him, and his almost total independence, pleased Pollard. He knew it would be well-nigh impossible to find another situation so suited to his tastes, and he was above all things a man who hated change.

So the next letter he received from Mr. Troughton, confirming his plans of doing up High Trees and living there, and repeating his wish that Pollard should make up his mind to marry as soon as possible, quite frightened the bailiff. He began to consider what he should do. Next market-day he inquired if anyone needed his services as agent, but no offer was forthcoming; and he was not sorry that the evil days of a change were staved off for a week or two at least.

Yet the alternative was not to be contemplated, and for days and days after receiving the letter Pollard hung his head and went about his work a dejected and bewildered man. Moreover, his miseries were not made less by the fact that it was the wettest hay-time of the last ten years.

He was returning one afternoon from the hayfield, having started the man with the cutter, and he could still hear the rattle of the machine as it swept down the clover. It was good soil in that particular field, and therefore specially beloved of Pollard. His heart sank within him when he thought that probably this would be the last time he would superintend the ingathering of its crop. How could he leave the old place, he asked himself bitterly, just now that everything was getting into order, that all the mistakes made by his predecessor were being repaired? Perhaps, after all, the alternative would have to be faced.

'But what 'plexes me,' he muttered, 'is, 'sposen I wor ter consider th' idea, how dew yer set about th' job of asken' of a gal.' He looked up to the sky as if to gather the information from the angry clouds passing overhead, but no help was vouchsafed him from above. Yet, as he dropped his eyes to earth again, they chanced to

rest on a pink hat, showing above the hedge which ran along the field in which he was walking.

'That's Nancy Skipper,' he said to himself. 'Now, she's a farmer's daughter; orter ha' been brought up fairly middlen', and ter know her place and work. Wonder if she would dew? Dang, I'll ha' a try and see what happens.' And without allowing himself time for consideration, he plunged through the hedge and slid down the bank, falling almost on top of the owner of the pink hat, who, giving a shriek of alarm, ran down the lane as fast as her legs could carry her.

Pollard stood still and watched the retreating figure, 'Silly fule; there, that's like women, frightened afore they know what 'tis they be frightened of. Here, I must stop she,' he exclaimed, and suiting the action to the word he set off in hot haste after the girl. The chase was a short one, for Pollard's long legs enabled him to overtake her in a minute or two.

'Here, stop, Miss Skipper. I want ter speak ter yer,' he cried, catching Nancy by the arm.

'Oh, it be yer, Mr. Pollard,' exclaimed the affrighted girl between gasps for breath. 'Oh, there—well—I never—I thought as how yer wor a tramp; yer frightened me somethen' cruel, yer did, fallen' almost o' top o' me and all. Oh, oh, my heart,' she panted; 'it be allus given ter stitches when I runs, and, oh, it's dreadful. Oh, Mr. Pollard, I be's goen' off inter a swomb.' Nancy sank down against the bank, and laid her head on the turf with a little moan.

'Well, now I'm in a pretty muddle, and no mistake, for dang me if I know how ter set about getten' gals back ter their senses, dashed if I dew. Here, Miss Skipper, don't go off; here, wake up, 'tis only me; dang yer, I say, don't go off.' Pollard shouted into a deaf ear. 'Hold yer on; I'll shake yer back ter life,' and he seized the girl by the shoulders and shook her limp head backwards and forwards with such violence that it was surprising the member did not fall off and roll at his feet.

The shaking had the desired effect, and the girl awoke with a start, shrieking with pain.

'Don't, Mr. Pollard; for gudeness' sake leave off; I ain't an addled egg. Whatever be yer up ter this arternune? Oh, lawks! my neck be nearly wrung. What dew yer want?'

Pollard, without a word of apology, plunged at once into questions.

'Look here, Miss Nancy, can yer cook?'

'Can I cook, Mr. Pollard? Ha' yer gone strange in yar mind? Did yer give me a fright, and run me all down th' lane ter ask me a question like that? 'Course I can cook. What's that ter yer, pray?'

'Be yer gude at house-work?' was Pollard's next question, paying no heed to the girl's remarks.

'Well, really, Mr. Pollard, whatever dew yer mean?'

'What I say, Miss. Are yer tidy about th' house, sweep and tarn rooms out proper like; no scampen' round th' corners? Cos my master be like me, wonnerful 'tickler.'

'Yar master is like yer,' answered Nancy, in tones of increasing astonishment. 'Why, what on arth dew yer mean? Oh, I see,' as a new light seemed to enter her brain. 'Yer be starten' a Registry Office for servants, and be hiren' of 'em for Mr. Troughton. I am very much obliged ter yer for yer kindness, Mr. Pollard, but yer mistaken in me; I am, I think, a little bit better bred and born than th' servant class.' Saying this, Nancy, with some show of dignity, got up, and, catching hold of her skirt, gave a little sweep of her arm as she had seen fine ladies in Bury Town do on a wet day when crossing the road. 'I am much obliged, but I am not seeking a situation at present; when I dew ha' th' fancy, or am brought so low, I will apply ter yer. Gude afternoon,' and Nancy Skipper squared her shoulders and walked on.

Pollard followed at her heel. 'Dang, I'm in a muddle,' he thought. 'I know, I must tarn on th' soft sawder, that's what women likes.' . . . 'Yer mistook in what I means, Miss Nancy,' he said, at the same time tapping her on the shoulder. 'Look yer here; give I a kiss, will yer?'

'Yer be in liquor, Mr. Pollard, or yer would not dare ter ask such a thing,' said the girl, quickening her footsteps and feeling really frightened.

'Not me, Miss Skipper, I only arst yer cos I know 'tis th' proper thing ter dew in these here circumstances.'

'Th' proper thing ter dew—circumstances! Why, what dew yer mean, Mr. Pollard?'

'Well, 'tis no use beaten' about th' bush. I am a man o' few words and swift action; I want a wife—bad. Will yer marry me?—and th' proper thing is ter ask a kiss fust, ain't it?'

The girl stared for a moment, and then exclaimed in alarm: 'He's out o' his mind—gone soft—shanny—mad. Help, help—h-e-l-p,' she screamed, and she again gathered up her skirts and ran shrieking down the lane, leaving the discomfited Pollard to

stand and scratch his head in amazement at the turn events had taken.

'There, ter be sure, did yer ever, th' duzzy little fule ! Well, there, I never did make no sense o' women. Go on, my beauty; yer'll scare all th' rooks off my mangle plants proper. Gude job I be shot o' th' likes o' yer,' and he stepped over a stile and made his way home. 'Better luck next time,' he muttered; 'p'raps I'll ha' th' fortune ter drop on a little less scarey one.'

Pollard was seated at his tea when a knock came at the door, and on shouting 'Come in,' an angry-looking miller walked into the kitchen.

'Hullo, Mr. Barnett,' exclaimed Pollard, 'glad to see yer. Come arter them fifty comb o' wheat arter all ?'

'No, Pollard, I ain't. Dang yar wheat ! and what's more, I'll never buy a grain off yer no more.'

'Why, what's th' matter ?' said the bailiff, looking at his visitor in astonishment.

'Matter, indeed. I'll dang sune let yer know what th' matter be by introducing my butemaker ter yar tailor, for yer ain't gude enow ter soil my hands on ; kicken' be th' only thing yer fit for. What ha' yer been insulten' and a-scaren' o' my gal, Nancy Skipper, out o' her wits for ?'

'Yar gal ? Well, I never ! How on arth dew yer think I should know she wor yar gal ?'

'Well, yer orter ha' knowed ; everyone in th' willage know as how I ha' been keepen' company along o' she, and a-walken' of her out on Sundays for th' last tew year and more. Why, our banns be goen' ter be put up th' end o' th' month. Yer orter be ashamed o' yarselv. If it had been anyone but yer, Pollard, I should ha' said yer wor took wicious ; but yer be th' last person I should ha' thought would ever ha' troubled his head about women. What's up with yer ?'

'Ah, if yer only knowed what's up with me yer would be sorry, Barnett. But that's more than I can tell yer. Still, I am right sorry and waxed I frightened of yar gal. I swear I never knowed yer had any truck along o' she ; and I am no liar, yer can bear that out, anyway.'

'Frightened her !' went on the miller, waving his hands expressively, 'I should just think yer did. Why, th' poor thing come tearen' inter my mill and fell all in a faint right inter a bin o' my best roller whites—nigh on smothered herself with th' flour, as well as spilen' of th' whole bin—six sacks o' my patent "Rise All

Viennas"—cos she had slumped through all th' mud in her agony. A pretty kelter th' bin o' flour be in, and she tew, poor mawther!"

"Well, if I can mend matters in any way I will, Barnett; and first o' all I'll pay for th' flour which be spoilt. I promise never ter trouble th' gal agen, and I'll pay for a wedden' present up ter tew pound. She can ha' anything she like ter buy in Bury up ter that amount."

"Oh, wery well, Pollard, I'll run back and tell her that yer made a mistake, an' will 'pologise. But dew yer be careful how yer take up with other men's young women or yer'll be getten' inter trouble, mark my words on it!"

"Should think so," muttered Pollard, as the miller closed the door behind him, "if I had took that frightened idiot for a wife. Lor', I be well out o' she! If Mr. Troughton had shouted out from th' parlour ter say his bacon worn't cooked ter his liken', she would ha' been so scared she'd ha' deeved her head up th' old chimbley and done a faint up there. That ends my first try. Oh, I must give over and ha' done with it, and leave th' old farm. Dang it all, I can see no other way out of it."

For the next few days Sam Pollard went about a miserable and discomfited man. Four months had passed since his master had sprung his proposition on him, and Mr. Troughton had not been to High Trees since. "Doubtless," said Pollard to himself, "he won't come till he thinks matters be so far advanced that he can send for the painters and the paperhanglers. He be awaiten' till I writes and tells him I be fixed up. He'll ha' some time ter wait for that there letter ter be writ," he added, with a bitter laugh.

One fine June morning he stood gazing sorrowfully at six fat calves—snugly housed in a barn—which were receiving a grooming at the hands of the man whose duty it was to attend to them.

"In all my time I never seed calves dewen' as these here be!" he exclaimed aloud. "There must be a first prize from one o' them at Bury Christmas Show, that's a sartenty. Look at that red one's grand frame—there's bone ter hang th' meat on; she's my fancy. Bury!" he went on, "why, she'll be quite gude enow for London if she keeps as level in th' back as she make a promise of! Six months more careful feeden' on top o' what she ha' got on her now will make her a first-prize beast anywhere. Six months' time! Ah," came the thought, "in six months' time I sha'n't be here ter see her; someone else will be pinnen' th' blue rosette on th' card with "Bred and fed by E. H. Troughton, Esq." writ on it." Something seemed to swell in the man's throat, and he felt stifled as he turned

away and walked out of the well-littered barn. 'I shall never take no more interest in anyone else's stock. Allus been allowed ter use my own jurisdiction over everything—and done well tew.' He walked moodily across a meadow till he came to a wheat field where the colour of the green corn promised a heavy crop. 'Sha'n't even see th' harvest carried,' he thought. 'They be rich crops t' year, and all.' Putting his hands behind his back, he strolled down the side of the field, mechanically moving them to pull up the dock or the thistle on which his eye chanced to light. He walked on till he came to the lane where he had had the unfortunate experience with Nancy Skipper. As he turned into it his attention was arrested by the figure of a young woman seated on a stile, and the bowed head and handkerchief in her hand told him that she was or had been weeping. 'Someone down in the dumps, like I be.' He looked carefully at the figure. 'That be my head horseman's daughter, Fanny Prig. What ails yer, Fanny?' he said, as he stopped in front of the woman. 'Yer look just like I feels t' mornen', wholly sorrowful and sad-like. Maybe yer like me, yer ha' got ter leave these here parts.'

So engrossed was Fanny with her grief that she had failed to notice Pollard's approach. 'Yer made me jump, yer did,' she exclaimed, uncovering her eyes. 'Yer be quite right; I am wholly feelen' sad, and, strange ter say, I wor thinken' o' leaven' th' willage an' goen' right away.' Here a sob stopped the girl's utterance, and she applied her handkerchief to her eyes with great vigour. 'But, there,' she said, making an effort at control, 'whoever would ha' thought of yer leaven'; I hain't heard a din about it afore. What be yer goen' away from th' dear old place for?'

'Ah, that's my affair, Fanny, and I can't exactly tell yer. But why be yer going?'

'Well, yer see, Mr. Pollard, that's—that's my affair,' she whimpered. 'I didn't orter tell yer; but I am sick at heart, dreadful sick, I be.'

A ray of hope fell on the despondent bailiff. Here was a young woman whom he knew to be a good daughter. Her father worked for him, though she herself had been brought up as dairymaid on an adjacent farm. For some reason or other she was sorrowful—probably she had lost her place, and was grieved at having to find another situation farther from home. Why wouldn't she answer his purpose?

The thought made a warm glow pass through his body. Here at last was a chance to remain on the land he loved so well. At the

same time an uncontrollable feeling of nervousness seized him, as it always did when in the presence of the opposite sex. He shuffled his heavy boots in the dust of the road, then, with an effort to conquer fear, made the plunge.

'Look yer here, Fanny. Yer down in th' dumps cos yer ha' got ter leave. So be I. Now we needn't neither on us go if yer'll be ruled by me. Don't interrupt,' he cried, as the girl was about to speak. 'It's like this here with me : unless I get a wife afore another month is out, I ha' got ter leave. Now I ain't no gude at courten', but here's th' way out o' th' muddle : yer marry me, and we can both stop on th' farm. What dew yer say ?'

The girl bowed her head in her hands and rocked her body to and fro. 'Ter think on it, ter think on it,' she murmured. 'I who loved yer in secret all last year, and yer wouldn't never look at me. It's tew bad, tew bad, it is.'

'Yer loved me, Fanny ! Well, there, 'clare ter Gawd, whoever would ha' thought it ?' Pollard exclaimed, drawing a little nearer. 'That's all right now, my dear. That's a help on th' way and out o' my muddle. Wish I had guessed it afore. Cheer up, Fanny Prig, and let's settle matters at once.'

'My name ain't Fanny Prig no longer, Mr. Pollard,' said the woman, rocking herself dolefully. 'It's Fanny Rogers now. If only I had known afore—didn't yer hear I wor married ter Rogers last Tuesday fortnight, and his love for me ha' gone like th' blowen' out o' a candle. He dew narthen but grumble about how I cook his wittals, and t' mornen' he beat me, he did. I'm something miserable, I can tell yer. If only I had knowned. Oh, Mr. Pollard, my love for yer would sune come back. Couldn't I get one o' them divorces as yer hears tell about, and marry yer ?'

'Yer married !' shouted Pollard, boiling with rage at having allowed himself to let out his secret. 'Why th' devil didn't yer tell me so at once ?—divorces, indeed ! I should think not. Never heerd tell of such a thing. Yer women are—well—beyond anything—beyond th' comprehension o' th' wisest. Go home and dew yar duty ter him as yer belongs ter, and larn ter cook. And for Gawd's sake don't say a word o' what we ha' been talken' about. I'm ashamed on yer.' And he strode on, leaving the woman weeping on the stile.

'No more trying it on with them young women,' said Pollard to himself, viciously cutting off the top of a nettle with his stick. 'Pollard, yer'll be getting o' yarself inter horrid, untold troubles if yer bain't more careful. Far better ter make up yar mind ter leave

High Trees and ha' done with it.' But the idea of leaving frightened the man, and he began to cast in his mind for other solutions of the problem. 'Young women is out o' th' question, arter my experience of them. Let me see ; there's widers. Why not a wider ? she *must* be safer with her belongings resting quiet in th' church-yard.' His thoughts lighted on Mrs. Bonsor, the woman who scrubbed his kitchen once a week. She was not a beauty, and she was far from temperate ; but a desperate man cannot look for perfection, and as he had cured one or two bad cases of drunkenness among his labourers, he thought he would be able to deal with Mrs. Bonsor.

It was Saturday, and in the back kitchen Mrs. Bonsor was busy on her knees doing what she termed 'swillen' th' old bricks down.' The back kitchen was only scrubbed once a fortnight, and as it was a hard piece of work, Mrs. Bonsor allowed herself two pints of beer while completing the job. She arranged the pints of beer like the junctions or large stations of a railway where the train pulls up to water the engine and passengers descend to refresh themselves. The two mugs of beer were placed one in the middle and one at the far end of the floor. She had just scrubbed up to the middle resting-place and had drained her mug, and was now casting longing eyes on the mug she would presently work up to, when Pollard entered the room.

To her surprise, instead of passing her with a grunting 'gude mornen' as was his wont, he wished her good morning quite genially, and seated himself on the steps of the kitchen he lived in.

Mrs. Bonsor's countenance was flushed, either with beer or the exercise of scrubbing bricks. Her face laboured under the same disadvantage as one of Pollard's smaller meadows—it was infested with moles, and, as in the meadow, on one side were large patches of them, while to the other side only a few of the more adventurous had strayed. At that moment they showed to advantage, so black were they against the surrounding glow caused by beer and scrubbing.

'Mrs. Bonsor,' began Pollard, trying to assume a jocular manner, 'what dew yer think ! I am going ter try and get married.'

'Never, sir,' replied the woman, pausing in astonishment with both her hands in the pail. 'Well, I wish yer joy. And who may the lucky young 'oman be ?'

'Oh, young women be danged,' came the reply. 'They be no use ter me. I am thinken' o' taken' a wider ; they are more my sort, I'm a-thinken'.'

'Well, widers, in course, ha' knowledge and experience ; knows

men's fancies and sichlike. I don't blame yer, Master Pollard; yer ha' gude sense. Some o' them gals are wholly muck. So sune as they gets wed they fare ter ha' done their little bit, and don't care for narthen. Now widers, they be often so glad of a gude home that they be only tew anxious ter start fresh-like.'

'Let me see, yer a wider, arn't yer, Mrs. Bonsor?'

'Yes, I am, leastways, Master Pollard—well—there—'

'Well, what?'

'Well, truth be a gude thing, and I allus holds ter it,' sighed Mrs. Bonsor. 'I am a *bit* of a wider, Mr. Pollard. Yer see, it's like this: my old chap took off about thirteen year ago and went ter Ameriky. Five year ago he wrote and said as how he had settled down for life, and would I like ter go over and join him. Well, water be all right for swillen' down bricks, but for floaten' about on for days and weeks together, as yer ha' ter dew ter get ter Ameriky, that ain't in my line, and sea-water which is all risen' up and bilen'-like be wus nor river water. So I refused. Then he wrote a second time, and said as he wor goen' ter get married agen, and I might dew th' same if I had a mind tew. There would be no need ter trouble about being took up for bigamy, or whatever yer terms it, as he never 'tended o' comen' home no more. So yer sees I am, virtually speaken', a wider; and I knows how yer likes things done,' she added insinuatingly.

'But I was not thinking of yer, Mrs. Bonsor,' hurriedly exclaimed Pollard. 'Gude heavens!' he said to himself, 'these women have no conscience at all, it seems.' 'I was only thinking that as yer a wider, or a *bit* of a wider, yarself, yer might know somethen' about some o' t' other widers in th' willage, and could recommend one that would suit th' likes o' me. I will give yer a handsome present if yer can find me one—say a couple o' sovereigns—'

'Well, I think I can 'arn that money easy enow,' answered Mrs. Bonsor, the prospect of the two sovereigns obliterating the disappointment that she was not to be the widow of Pollard's choice. 'I'll manage it, don't yer fear. I can just give one or tew o' them—the best on 'em like—a hint, narthen more, so if yer don't like 'em yer needn't go no farther; just a back-door way sort o' nod that yer a bit partial ter widers. See? Tew pound,' she muttered; 'eighteen, thirty-six, forty gallon o' beer.' Mrs. Bonsor scrubbed hard at the thought of it.

'Dew yer mind my comen' in Monday mornen' ter bake yar batch o' bread? They ha' got a new preacher comen' o' Sunday ter th' church, and I ha' got ter dew extra cleanen' t' arternune. Sich a

fuss folk make o' their religion nowadays ! I ha' put yer jint on, and I'll bake Monday.'

Monday morning found Pollard busy at his desk, getting out the monthly accounts to send to Mr. Troughton, who had written to say that, as he would be unable to visit High Trees for a few weeks, he would send a cheque for wages. Pollard was practically a self-taught man, and was not too quick at figures, and anything in the way of a noise upset his calculations. Twice had he started a long column of figures and been stopped by a persistent clamour outside his door. In a voice of irritation he shouted to Mrs. Bonsor : 'What th' tarnation be all that there duller outside ? Be it hundreds o' cats, or ha' they tarned a yard o' pigs loose ? Just tell th' yard-man ter stop that infernal noise, Mrs. Bonsor.'

'Please, sir,' said Mrs. Bonsor, in a voice of trepidation, 'it ain't pigs nor yet cats. I am afeard it be several o' them widers. I happened ter speak ter tew or three o' th' mucky things, and they ha' all thought fit ter come up here at once, and they be fighten' cruel, they be.'

'What ? where ?—let's look,' exclaimed Pollard, jumping up and running to the window in the back kitchen.

There were four women outside, all talking at once, and two of them were making ready to settle their differences by a resort to fists.

'Yes,' one shouted, 'yer an artful thing, yer are. Yer knows th' way ter a man's heart be through his stummick, yer and yer meat pasty !'

'Who be yer callen' a thing ? What about yar sausage-rolls in that bit o' newspaper——' Pollard opened the door and, hurling invectives at the women, ordered them off the premises with such a show of violence that one and all slunk frightened away.

Then, shutting himself into his kitchen, he seized a pen and notebook. 'I will dew it at once and ha' no more o' this,' he exclaimed. He took up the pen and wrote :

'Dear and honoured Sir,—As I cannot see my way clear to fall in with your plans and get married, I most reluctantly give you a month's notice from to-day.

'SAM POLLARD.'

'There, that's done it.' He sealed the letter, left it on his desk, and went out to give his daily orders.

Never had Pollard felt so miserable as he did that summer morning. The memory of that letter was with him all the day.

He fingered it when he returned home in the evening. 'Must take it down ter post,' he said. Something seemed to whisper, 'Post it to-morrow,' and he listened to the voice within him.

All night he turned and tossed about with the thought that post his letter in the morning he must. He rose early and looked round the yards ; when he came in to breakfast he saw a letter from Mr. Troughton lying on the table. He opened it, thinking it was his cheque for wages. He read it, and, hardly understanding, read it again. A shout of joy came from his throat, and he turned the letter over and read it aloud :

'To Sam Pollard.—I am writing to tell you I have quite altered my plans. I am going to be married, and as my future wife does not care to live in a house so close to a farm as High Trees is, I have bought Fairfield Hall, in Suffolk ; therefore we can go on as we have done, and I shall not do the farmhouse up unless you are thinking of getting married yourself, when I will paper and paint it to suit your taste.

'Shall not be over yet, so send on accounts. Am very much engaged just now.—Yours,

'E. H. TROUGHTON.'

'Well, there, that solves th' difficulty for ever, as far as I'm consarned. Master Troughton, yer knows more about th' gals and how ter get wed nor I dew, and I wish yer th' joy I feels myself.' Pollard danced round the room, making the plates and dishes rattle in his excitement. 'Paint and paper the old place when I get married ! If the house ha' got ter wait till then, it will ha' ter wait till I be dade. And that's th' truth, and I says it.'

CHARLES FIELDING MARSH.

## *El Moko.*

**H**E was a burro from the Mexican Sierras. Juan was the unpretentious name that belonged to him by right of baptism, El Moko the title of nobility into which he came during our brief association.

The new appellation had for us a flavour of agreeable reminiscence. For the only member of the donkey tribe with whom we had ever before been on terms even of nodding acquaintance was the 'moke' of London town—the patient little quadruped, who, six days of every week, draws a costermonger's barrow laden with cabbages and cauliflowers around residential suburbia, on Sundays and Bank Holidays shares with his master the rural delights of Kent or Surrey, and on the annual carnival of Derby Day disputes with my lord and his coach-and-four the right of the road to Epsom Downs.

Then El Moko!—so felicitously appropriate was the title that the Royal Court of Heralds at Madrid might have accepted responsibility for its selection. Not merely did the sonorous syllables have the true Spanish ring, but they also served to convey just the proper suggestion of ancient and noble lineage. For with his grave dignity of countenance and solemn deliberation of pace, our burro surely looked the asinine hidalgo, every inch of him, from hoof-point to ear-tip. 'Juan' was commonplace and of to-day, 'El Moko' carried the imagination back to the age of knight errantry.

The old name, to be sure, was retained for familiar and affectionate use. The new one was reserved for occasions of ceremonious address or half-apologetic expostulation. And its sub-acid touch of irony even the beast came to appreciate, for he would cock his ears and whisk his tail at each reminder of his blue-blooded Castilian ancestry.

When Juan joined our family circle we were sojourners on the southern edge of the Colorado Desert—veritable habitants of the wilderness, for the nearest settlement, a store and a possible dozen

of wooden shanties, was full two miles distant from our place of abode. This was a cottage niched in the mouth of a ravine and overhung by lofty mountains. It was certainly 'a picturesque and desirable residence,' as the enterprising land agent had assured us ; but his 'pure water flowing past the door' proved to be a delusion and a snare. The big smooth boulders in a dried-up arroyo did indeed give proof that a stream had been here in bygone seasons, while a miniature cascade far up the canyon afforded reasonable promise that there might be running water again when the present winter trickle would be augmented by the summer-melted snows. But, meantime, this same cascade was our nearest domestic supply, and the problem of transporting the requisite number of daily gallons became a pressing one. On the advice of the local pundits we resolved to buy a burro.

The storekeeper of the village was accordingly commissioned to keep a watchful eye on prospectors passing to and from the mountains, and to make reasonable offer for any suitable animal with whose services they might be willing to dispense. Only two days had elapsed when up came word to our canyon chalet that a mining man was below with a burro for sale. Hastening down, I found the whole settlement inspecting and appraising.

By general consent Juan was pronounced to be sound of hoof and limb, his dentition flawless, his integument without a galled spot. In my presence he was subjected to the crucial test of downward pressure by vigorous hands across the small of the back, such as might have brought a camel to his knees, but left this burro immovable as a rock. He had a stolid face and a placid eye, and bore every impertinence of fingers thrust between ribs with tranquil indifference. For an animal of such points the price demanded seemed ridiculously inadequate ; so without any attempt at chaffering seven dollars were promptly transferred from my pocket to the miner's. In triumph, and amid a buzz of congratulation, I led away my purchase by means of a halter borrowed from my friend the storekeeper.

Like a lamb, Juan followed me home. The excitement of my three boys—will it ever fade from memory ? A saddle was scorned ; before I had time even to estimate the extra cost of this equipment, the youngsters unanimously elected for bare-backed riding. My wife looked a little timid and doubtful. But the economy of the arrangement appealed to me, so I piled the trio up on the ample length of shaggy hide. 'Houpla !' cried the foremost lad, the halter firmly gripped in both hands ; and at a gait that was

duly reverential, Juan mov'd off with his precious and wildly hurrahing burden. A change from inanimate flour sacks, I reflected. But Juan never winked an eye ; he just plodded on—willingly, steadily, patiently.

Our little house-mother surveyed the scene with an expanding smile of satisfaction. Her momentary fears were dissipated.

‘ El Moko is a treasure ! ’ she declared.

And there and then Juan came to his title.

During several hours nothing befell to disturb our equanimity. If ever donkey was blessed with a tolerant and imperturbable soul, Juan showed himself to be so endowed. The liberties those little rascals took, the ignominies that burro complacently endured ! In front of the house was an apricot orchard, and up and down the avenues El Moko was paraded. For considerable periods all three boys would be atop, but at intervals there were experiments in vaulting on from behind, in standing erect, in lying crosswise like captives or wounded men, in lassoing with a clothes-line, in charging with cavalry on an imaginary foe, and amid a truly infernal din of beaten tin cans. We watched the performance from afar, but did not seek to interfere. No house pet could have proved a more good-natured playmate than this burro of the wild.

‘ Yes, El Moko is indeed a treasure.’ Having endorsed my wife’s encomium, I proceeded to enlarge on the qualities of our acquisition with pardonable pride. ‘ I saw it at the first glance. Judge a horse by its eye, Poor Richard or some other authority says. Now, just look at that donkey’s eyes. They are soft and gentle as your own, my — ’

But sentiment was cut short by a vigorous box on my ears.

‘ Changed days, sir, when you dare to compare my eyes to a donkey’s ! ’

With chastened feelings I could but reflect that matrimonial responsibilities and mellowing age sadly impair one’s powers of turning a compliment. But my wife’s attention had suddenly been diverted to other things ; she clutched wildly at my arm.

‘ Good heavens ! what is happening now ? ’

Following her frightened gaze, I beheld El Moko’s nose pivoted on a sandy spot of ground, and, even as we watched, down he went on his knees, then over he rolled on his back, upraising his four sturdy legs into mid-air. With thankfulness we saw that the children, after ricochetting like indiarubber balls to a safe distance, had scrambled to their feet to study this extraordinary display of asinine agility. The burro was kicking out vigorously, occasion-

ally rocking from side to side, then resuming the absurd inverted position, like an overturned tea-table.

At a bound I was down the veranda steps and speeding across the orchard, my wife hastening behind.

But as we came up it was clear that Juan was still in excellent good temper; he was simply revelling in his sand-bath, while the youngsters, entering into the fun of the situation, were laughing and screeching with approving glee.

One quick yank at the halter, and I had the animal again on his proper understandings.

Meeting my stern eye, he did indeed look a trifle shame-faced. Yet withal, standing stock-still there before us, he seemed mild and innocent as before. The boys were for mounting once more, but the anxious mother had gathered her brood closely around her. A wave of her hand towards the hitching-post in front of the house told us all that riding exercises were over for the day. I led the offender away.

I had been informed, by divers authorities in the village, that a burro requires no special provender—that he can pick up a sumptuous living from the sage brush and kindred shrubs. These grew in abundance all around. So, improvising the clothes-line as a tethering-rope, I soon had Juan tied, an ample circle of the suitable herbage within his easy reach. The sun was setting. Our supper was ready. We left the burro to his.

Through the windows the boys, while they ate, kept their gaze fastened on their new and already dearly loved friend. I myself cast an occasional and unobtrusive glance in the same direction. The sage was certainly dry and uninviting; without prompting, I could see that the animal was not nibbling a leaf—that he was regarding the closed door forlornly and reproachfully. But soon came attempts to rouse me to compassion.

‘Father,’ began our ten-year-old Philosopher, ‘how can a donkey possibly live on such dried-up sticks as these? He needs a jolly good feed of hay.’

‘Nonsense, my son,’ I explained. ‘What mining prospector carries hay into the wilderness? The desert is the burro’s natural home, and he is accustomed to desert fare.’

‘Won’t you let me give him my piece of pie?’ pleaded our Mischief of eight.

‘Or my cocoa?—donkeys loves cocoa,’ proposed the ungrammatical youngling of the trio.

But my heart was obdurate. Juan had thirty feet of rope,

and a virgin patch of heaven's own appointed pasture. And what burro could wish for more ?

I watched the last morsels of the apple pie reluctantly consumed; with pointed significance I tipped the dregs of the cocoa pitcher into my own cup.

'Where is he to sleep to-night ?' asked the Philosopher.

'Where he is tethered, of course,' I replied.

But the answer was met by a chorus of protesting 'Ohs !'

'Oh, father, it's so cold at night !' 'Oh, can't we have him inside ?' 'Oh, dear dads, he can have my beddie, and I'll sleep with oo'—such were the remarks with which I was assailed, and which gave me my first ominous foreboding that with the coming of El Moko there was trouble in the home.

Explanations were powerless to convince ; the cheerful philosophy I attempted conjured up no responsive smile.

'Think of the burro's thick rough coat, boys ; it is better than a dozen blankets.' 'Why, Juan has slept in the brush every night of his life.' 'Who ever heard of a donkey in a bed, little man ?'

'The three bears had beds,' interjected Master Mischief, his face momentarily lighted by the consciousness that he had found a weak spot in my argument.

'Tut-tut ! It is past your bedtime now.'

So, to put a stop to controversy, the whole crowd were swept off to their respective cribs.

It was some hours before the last sleepy voice died away, and the ever-recurring refrain of the whispered conversation stealing into the adjoining parlour had been : 'Poor, poor Juan ; no supper, and out in the cold ; poor, poor Juan.' I was beginning to feel like some callous monster refusing bread to a wailing, starving multitude.

Nor could I fail to observe that my wife by this time was affected with a certain tender-heartedness for El Moko. To correct this mood, I led her forth into the moonlight. It was the month of January, but in that favoured desert climate the crisp dry cold of the night was delightful—we ourselves could have slept in the open without discomfort. Juan ate a crust of bread from our hands, accepted a pat on the neck, and by a wag of his tail bade us a contented good-night. So with easy consciences we returned indoors to our rest.

At sunrise we were awakened by an eager voice. The Philosopher was standing by our bedside, an announcement of disaster on his trembling lips :

‘Juan is gone !’

Yes ; the burro had broken his rope right enough, and was nowhere to be seen.

Two hours later, when we had scoured the neighbouring brush in vain quest for the wanderer, and were debating in family council the necessity of securing help to find the trail, we were suddenly confronted by the storekeeper, who, unseen, had led Juan up through the orchard. The man was irate ; the burro a picture of abject misery.

‘Look here, boss, that burro of yours has been down at my store all night, and ate up two gallons of molasses !’

Such was the indictment that fell upon our astonished ears. Now was Juan’s disreputable appearance explained—his nose like a fly-paper, all stuck over with sticks, and straws, and sand.

A more detailed account of what had happened showed that the criminal had got into the yard behind the store, and, overturning a keg of molasses that had been standing with its lid off, had gorged himself with the sweet stuff. He certainly looked blown out and inwardly fermenting.

‘But how did he get into the yard ?’ I inquired. ‘Was the gate open ?’

‘No, siree,’ came the decisive rejoinder. ‘I ain’t in the habit o’ leavin’ open gates down my way’—this with a withering side glance at the slip-rails of our fence lying scattered on the ground. ‘But he’s a burro this one, he is.’

And with this crowning, if somewhat enigmatic, denunciation a pointed finger was extended towards the guilty quadruped, who was standing with drooped head and flopping ears too utterly dejected even to attempt to shake off the myriad flies buzzing around his treachery proboscis.

‘He’s a burro, no doubt,’ I smilingly replied. ‘But that doesn’t explain how he got through the gate to your keg of molasses.’

‘Oh, he’s a burro,’ reiterated the storekeeper, as if the words were full and sufficient explanation. ‘Just the derndest cunningest burro I’ve spotted for a long time. He don’t need no gate—he breaks down no fences—he gets *under* ‘em. I caught him wriggling out of my corral like a blamed rattlesnake.’

Lower and lower hung El Moko’s head ; well did he know that the words of angry rebuke referred to him ; no midnight carouser hauled up before a justice for disturbing the peace ever looked more utterly ashamed of himself. Then that débris-encrusted

muzzle—there was a big bumble-bee settling on it now! For the life of me I could not restrain my laughter.

But meanwhile, also, I had reflected. Perhaps the poor brute had been really hungry. If there had been provision at home, he might not have gone off on this burglarious foray.

‘Look here, my friend, I’ll make it all right about the molasses. And you can bring me up a bale of hay this morning.’

The aggrieved man began to show signs of pacification.

‘I guess he’ll need a stouter rope, too, than this ’ere piece of packing-thread.’

He had touched the fragment of frayed cord dangling from the burro’s neck, and I could see my wife’s face wince at the contemptuous reference to her ruined clothes-line, that had borne the burden of many a washing-day in the Old Country, and brought safe her most cherished dress-basket across ocean and continent.

‘All right,’ I cheerfully assented. ‘A stout half-inch rope is always useful.’

At this *dénouement* the boys looked immensely relieved. They had been standing by, silently watching and listening, not even daring to laugh at Juan’s woe-begone and ridiculous appearance. I had easily enough read the fear on their faces—the penalty they had been dreading was the instant banishment of their favourite. So now they led him off, jubilant—but discreetly jubilant, lest too open rejoicing over the repentant prodigal might lead to the revocation of my forgiveness.

Until dinner-time they were busy behind the house, scraping Juan’s nose, and restoring the animal to a semblance of respectability. His moral rehabilitation was aided by a bucket of potato-peelings and kitchen oddments, which he ate with obvious relish after his recent sickly debauch. During the afternoon his young masters had him out at the far end of the orchard, and were putting him through all the old games, and inventing new ones. He was again the sedate and dignified and cheerfully enduring El Moko. When being led home at fall of evening, he manifested a desire to roll on the identical sand patch of the previous day, and, as the trick was known now and so involved risk of hurt to no one, was allowed to indulge his humour. Laughter again resounded. The boys could have hugged both donkeys—Juan and me.

Meanwhile the bale of hay had arrived, and had been dumped on the side porch, which, in the absence of any stable, I deemed to be a suitable corner for its storage. While we were enjoying our supper, Juan was munching contentedly at a liberal armful of the

fodder deposited by the side of the hitching-post, to which he was securely tethered by the new rope. That night the youngsters were satisfied, and even I slept the calm sleep of him who has dealt forgivingly by a fellow sinner.

In the small hours I was disturbed by an uncomfortable dream. I had heard in my sleep the champing of horses' jaws innumerable. I was awake now. But, ye gods, the strange noise continued. Had a squadron of United States cavalry arrived during the night, and bivouacked in our canyon? With some such confused thought in my mind, I jumped out of bed, and opened the French window that led on to the veranda. What a sight it was that, in the full flood of moonlight, met my astounded gaze!

Around the side porch seemed to be gathered all the mules, horses, Indian cayuses, and burros of the district; in their midst was Juan, the hitching-post dragged from the ground and trailing at the end of his long tether; all over the place were scattered fragments of the big bale of hay that was to have lasted this miserable ass for over a fortnight. My presence on the stage was not yet discovered, and I could see that Juan was presiding genially over his impromptu supper-party. While I was yet lost in silent contemplation, a pair of big black mules came scampering up; El Moko stepped forward a few yards, and with quite admirable courtesy conducted the newcomers to the place of honour beside the tumbled bundle of feed still remaining on the porch. Thus reinforced, the champ, champ, champ of industrious jaws continued.

I had recognised these mules—they belonged to my friend the storekeeper. Retreating into the house, I softly closed the window and returned to bed. The mischief was done; to attempt to save the mere crumbs of the feast would have been absurd; Juan and his guests might as well enjoy their good time undisturbed. Besides, I had my plan.

With the dawn I was astir, and had despatched my eldest boy for the storekeeper, whom I knew to be, like myself, an early riser. While my messenger was gone I kept an eye on the equine herd, now scattered to discreet distances, nosing for the last wind-blown straws, or watching the scene of midnight revelry with obvious reluctance to tear themselves away from a haunt of such delightful memories. Juan, with his long tethered rope and its encumbering stake, was safely entangled in a mesquite bush.

The storekeeper came. Without a word I led him to the end of the front veranda, and there pointed to the hoof-trampled

quarter-acre littered with scraps of fodder, and to the figures of the thieves half concealed among the brushwood.

‘Crickey !’ exclaimed my visitor ; and he took off his hat, and scratched his head, to aid him towards a fuller understanding of the situation.

‘The last pound of my hay gone,’ I mildly suggested.

‘Yep, a pretty tidy clean-up, ain’t it ?’

‘Do you recognise thce black mules over yonder ?’

‘Gee—whittaker ! Them cusses in the push too ?’

‘They are yours, aren’t they ? I thought that corral gates were never left open down your way.’

The storekeeper clapped his hat back on his head, and, slapping his thigh, faced me.

‘Guess, boss, that just about squares the molasses.’

So the molasses were squared—morally, for my good friend the storekeeper and I understood each other, and our difference, as both knew, had never really been one that mere dimes or quarters could have adjusted. But in my own personal reckoning of debit and credit I was still a bale of hay to the bad—aggravatingly, for this time I could not blame our hospitable El Moko so much as my own carelessness, or rather my ignorance of the devouring hunger that ever abides with desert denizens, be they half-wild Indian ponies scrubbing for a living, or coyotes reduced by dearth of jack-rabbit meat to beetle diet.

In my conscientious desire to cure Juan of any lingering longing for stolen sweets, to implant in his breast the love of home and its simple but satisfying fare, I ordered another bale of hay. This I deposited in a sort of cellar, or lumber-closet, that ran the length of the house under the veranda. In the absence of hasp or lock, I secured the door by means of a goodly-sized rock. The hitching-post was again driven, firm and true. At night Juan was once more bountifully fed, and we retired to rest feeling confident that there could be no further trouble.

But that night the house was struck by an earthquake. In my sleep I felt the shock distinctly—the very bed rising beneath me. I was sitting up in a cold perspiration of terror, when the second shock came—bump ! The whole floor trembled. Bump !—bump !—bump !—three, four, five upheavals all in quick succession. What the deuce was happening, or going to happen ? Then it dawned upon me that the seismic disturbance proceeded from the basement of the adjacent veranda.

‘Holy smoke ! Juan was there, tugging at the bale of hay.’

Bump ! I was on my feet now, and could feel the broad of his back through the planking. He had heard me, for all below grew suddenly still. But there came through the hush a soft whinnying right under my window.

Out into the night I stole, clothed in a dressing-gown and armed with a stout cudgel. The moon had set behind the mountain peaks, and the canyon was in darkness. But by the starlight I could distinguish the dusky forms of horses and mules congregated around the cellar door. I advanced cautiously along the veranda. There was a wild scurrying of hoofs, the rattle of scattered gravel, the tattoo of the stampede. But I had got in one good blow.

Alas ! it was our own El Moko I had smitten, right on the nose that he had protruded inquisitorily from the wide-open door beneath the veranda.

Yet, after all, well had he merited the punishment.

I procured a lantern and led him forth, the villain. Only then did I discover that his tethering-rope reached right to the cellar-door. He, or his accomplices, had rolled away the rock, and the incorrigible prodigal, who alone was small enough, or daring enough, to enter through the doorway, had been in the act of pulling out wisps of hay for his hungry comrades.

Next day a chain and padlock were procured, and thenceforward my fodder was dispensed only in regulation rations—to be eaten in the daylight while there were no dissolute cayuses around to lead El Moko into demoralising habits of conviviality.

But through the coming weeks Juan's early escapades were to be fully expiated by his patient and continuous usefulness. Every day he carried water for us—twenty or forty gallons, in empty kerosene-tins slung on a rough pack-saddle. He taught the children how to ride, for they might roll on to him, and off him, and over him, just as they pleased, without ever a show of teeth or a raising of hoofs. Yet he could never cross that one particular patch of sand without his nose going down, were his load boys or water-cans. But tumbling performances at inconvenient times were averted by avoidance of the spot, and when occasion served Juan was allowed to roll on his back to his heart's content. The youngsters, indeed, never seemed to tire of the diverting spectacle.

These were days of unaccustomed domestic hardship. Bread had to be baked at home, and my wife's initial experience in the art was acquired from a careful perusal of the directions on a box of yeast cakes ! That first batch of bread was heavy—very heavy. The Philosopher and I bore one big loaf to the table, carrying it

between us as if it had been a log of mahogany, and gravely asking the patiently smiling house-mother whether we should saw it or spilt it open with an axe. Juan consumed that loaf, and all its fellows. He ate not merely with zest but to advantage, for next morning Master Mischief declared that the animal was 'a foot more all round in thickness.'

His head thrust through the open kitchen-window, Juan, with smug satisfaction, watched the preparations for another baking. This time the bread would certainly not be heavy; after a family consultation, an extra cake of yeast was decided on. We were on our feet half the night, scooping up the dough that rose like a succession of white pillows from the dish containing it, until every available vessel in the house had been filled. And when at last tired nature asserted itself, and we had to yield to sleep, the pails and basins ranged in a row were still visibly swelling. Next morning the oven was not heated. Juan breakfasted royally on *pain soufflé*, uncooked, but apparently much to his liking, for he cleaned up the whole abortive batch, and at the finish hee-hawed for more.

But this was his last feast of the kind, for at the third time of trying our clever and undaunted little baker turned us out loaves that might have made a Parisian *boulangerie* envious. Yet, on every bread-making day that followed, she had a laughable—perhaps a profitable—reminder of early failures. With the first pat-patting of the dough in would come El Moko's head through the window. He earned his reward; for just so soon as the new batch proved right, he had a modest munch over the remaining crusts of the old one.

By this time we all loved Juan well, and held him in high esteem. His rough, unkempt coat had been groomed to the smoothness and sheen of satin. His well-fed, rotund form would have imparted an aspect of benevolence to a municipal graftor or a Trust magnate. He no longer roamed by night, putting self-respect to the peril of syrupy temptation; he brought home no more cayuses of questionable character for riotous supper-parties. Yet at all times he enjoyed perfect liberty—the hitching-post was pensioned, the lariat hung upon the wall.

Noble blood had told, ancestry had triumphed over environment. El Moko had become a personage of importance in the household. He was consulted in all our daily plans, deferred to in many ways. Of a truth I was often painfully made conscious that, in the eyes of the children at all events, I was no longer the supreme

head of our limited monarchy. But I owed the ass no grudge ; his was a mild ' burrocracy.'

At last the hour for parting had come round. In five days we would be leaving the desert—regretfully moving from our canyon home—for the month was April, and the thermometer far up in the nineties. A surveying party passed by, an offer was made for Juan, and, since he could not come with us, we were glad to find for him kindly new masters. So El Moko, his halter held by a stranger's hands, was led down the orchard and away beyond the cotton-wood trees that had marked the limit of the children's domain.

For long hours after Juan's departure the three boys sat weeping on the veranda—they were broken-hearted and inconsolable ; even the Philosopher sobbed like any one of the little girls he so often professed to despise.

It was the eve of our departure, and we were seated on our packing-cases watching for the last time the sun setting over the noble sierra whose lofty saw-toothed edge was our western sky-line. Up through the orchard came the figure of a man. Who could it be ? Most of our desert friends had already fled towards the coast belt ; to the few remaining we had bidden adieu.

Our visitor proved to be the chief of the survey party. He shook hands, a comical smile on his face, and then dived into the tale he had come to tell.

' Say, guv'nor, the storekeeper thinks you'd like to know 'bout that burro of yours. We were two days out, and at night, when the whole camp was asleep, he started in on our stores. Ate a ham, a side of bacon, a sack of flour, another of sugar ; opened up a case of crackers, and swallowed the lot ; and I'll be thumped if he didn't chew flat every can of meat we had, and suck out the contents clean as a boy blows a blackbird's egg. I've had to come back twenty miles for fresh supplies.'

We all laughed loud and long.

' Will you sell us Juan back again ? ' I asked, when the hilarity had subsided ; for upon my word I was figuring out in my mind the cost of El Moko's transport to the sea-coast.

' Sell him ? Not for gold. He's a burro, he is.'

And that I now knew was eulogy indeed. El Moko, my friend, shall we ever see your dusty coat again ?

EDMUND MITCHELL.

## *The First Sight of Rome.*

ROME is indeed the Eternal City, for she has no age of her own, but is of all ages at once. Beneath ancient Rome they have found primal Rome, and aboriginal man, his clay in her clay ; but it has not made her a year older. Above modern Rome they have built new Rome, plus-quam-Paris Rome ; but it has not made her a year younger. She is waiting for some higher purpose, some greater work ; it will come, and she will gain a place in the world's plan higher than ever. Therefore the first sight of the Eternal City is a tremendous event in any man's life, and he would be a fool who should go to Rome off-hand, without forethought, without reverence, without study. Nobody who is not quite grown-up should be taken there ; it is a wicked waste of money ; the child-tourist is pitiable everywhere, but at Rome hateful. Nobody should be allowed to go there twice till all the good people have been there once. And, at the Italian frontier, an examination should be held not only of the luggage, but also of the passengers. It is absurd that the Douane should confiscate tobacco while it permits the importation into Italy of tons of stupid, listless travellers who would be just as happy in Germany. The examination should be fairly hard, and might be made to include honours ; a syllabus of books to be submitted should be published three months beforehand ; and I would suggest, as members of the Examining Board, Signor Boni, Mr. Marion Crawford, and my dear friend the Rome correspondent of the *Times*. They who failed to satisfy the examiners should be sent back, for further study, to Basle. It would be difficult to find a worse punishment.

But no sentence is too severe on him or her who starts for Rome without book-learning. And no reading is more pleasant than that of the winter evenings which are spent in the prospect of Rome in the spring. Begin with any old school-book, the simpler the better ; then go off at a tangent to Gibbon, Vasari, Horace, Mrs. Oliphant, Zola, Newman, Ruskin, Hawthorne, any and all of them.

It is a strange experience how all books, like all roads, lead to Rome ; how each book introduces you to more books, till the trouble is to find a book about not-Rome. Pore over maps and guides and photographs, make lists of Popes and Emperors, plan out your days, learn your way about the streets, anticipate the look of the great buildings, prepare yourself to recognise the illustrious ghosts whom you will have the honour of meeting. There are silly people who say that we ought not to read about places before we see them. These are they who should be stopped at the frontier, and sent back to Basle. Are we bidden to the feast, and shall we not put on the wedding garment ? Do what we will, it is nothing, or next to nothing. For all our reading, we arrive ill-clad in shreds and patches of facts pinned round us anyhow, and hardly decent.

Dear books and guides that charmed away the worries and the fogs of winter, you gave me, in visions, the wonders of the Eternal City. First in order of time, last in order of discovery, you showed me what was there before Rome was there ; the poor little Adams and Eves whose bones have been unearthed in the Sepulchretum of the Forum, far below the floors of the temples. Then the beginnings of the city—a swamp and some hillocks, with huts, and communal fire and water, and some sort of Nature-worship, and one or more kings. Then, age after age, Etruscans, and Gauls, and Greeks, and Gauls again—*tantæ molis erat*—and Egypt, and the East, were drawn and absorbed into the city's life, till there was no world but Rome ; and in Jerusalem they said, ‘ We have no king but Cæsar.’ Age after age all men came, by one or other of the roads which all end in Rome, to her gates, and within her walls ; she opened her market-places to all religions, philosophies, arts, sciences, and trades ; she gave to all Heaven and all Hell the run of her streets. Why, one might read for years, and get no further than the martyrdom of Saint Peter ; with eighteen and a-half centuries still to be studied. But the books, most of them, leave out the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as it were in pity for our weakness ; they take us straight from Michael Angelo to Napoleon, and would have us believe that Italy, exhausted, slept for two hundred years.

It is more profitable to read than to talk. They who have been to Rome will not tell you what you want to learn. Ask your neighbour, at dinner, about Florence or Venice, and you will get a ready answer, with much advice about hotels and excursions, and the usual raptures over Botticelli, and the expected lamenta-

tion over the fallen campanile. Ask about Rome, and the answer will be slower, and, when it comes, less commonplace ; he or she has been touched too deep, is unwilling to talk at random, bored by your thirst for general information, and prefers to be silent. Rome does have that effect on some people : they feel like Jacob at Bethel, 'How dreadful is this place.' You lie awake, your first night there, with sheer amazement that there you are ; you, of all persons, really you, in Rome ; it is but a few hours to wait till the day comes, and you will be out and about her streets, and you marvel that kind Heaven lets you do it ; you say her name to yourself, and stare into the darkness of the room. Those many months of reading, those books which were in your hands by tram and by train, and all the long sequence of anticipations dimmed with fear that they might never come true—they were none of them wasted, and you have obtained your heart's desire. You thought of Rome, and talked of Rome, till those nearest and dearest to you trembled for your reason, and forbade her name to be mentioned in the family circle, and you were compelled to allude to her as 'my holiday' or as 'the Continent.' But the months came down to weeks, and the weeks to days ; and now it is no wonder that you lie awake.

How you arrived, by what route and at what hour, matters nothing—the readiness is all. It is a mistake to travel first class ; I speak not from experience, but from conviction that they are happy who go as pilgrims, and exercise their philosophy to endure, and their wits to elude, the discomforts of the journey. 'Let us get there in time for dinner,' says the rich man. But it is not amiss, either, to come by night. You have watched the sunshine fading from the sky and the fields ; the last little hillside Umbrian town has been left dreaming in the twilight ; you have bought and fought that strange basketful of food at Arezzo ; you are tired, restless, unwashed, wandering up and down the corridor ; and the train thrashes its way through the dark as through a tunnel, and you might be anywhere. Now, being due and over-due, your fellow-travellers begin to be of one mind with you, and the corridor is half filled with them, limp bodies and ardent souls, watching for the lights of Rome and the glow in the sky standing over a city. Many false lights, apart or in groups, drift past you and are whirled away, and none of them were Rome. And now the whole corridor is crowded with unpleasant people butting at your legs with big bundles, and the engine whistles long and loud, and there are lights drawing together, convergent roads, market gardens, silent white houses, and at last the dear and welcome streets.

Of course, one ought to walk from the station, and so I will next time, if Heaven gives me the chance ; past the Baths of Diocletian, and the vast Ministry of Finance, and up the Via Goito and the Via Ludovisi—bless them!—to the kindly Hotel Sud, which took me for nine *lire* a day, wine comprised ; and gave me a room which looked on a garden of palm and olive and roses—and the nightingale was singing. Oh, the gardens of Rome ! what have Venice and Florence to compare with them ? Or I would go to the Hotel Hassler ; for there I should be at the top of the Trinità steps, surely the best place for a first sight of Rome.

There, as you stand on the terrace, all things, whichever way you turn, are beautiful. Behind you is the pleasant-looking old-fashioned church, with its attendant obelisk like a pillar of light ; in the name of Italy, and in the name of Egypt, they welcome you ; each of them is a delight to the eyes, and the two of them together would make a fine heraldic device for the city. On your right hand is the Villa Medici, and all the glory of the Pincian Gardens, where it is ‘roses, roses all the way.’ On your left, the switchback Via Sistina, and at the end of it a glimpse of that miracle, Sta. Maria Maggiore. Below you are the grand curves and open spaces of the Trinità steps, and then the Piazza with its fountain, and then a great multitude of churches and houses and tangled streets, which is the Promised Land. White and yellow and red are the houses ; and above their tiles, on your left, rises that strange black apparition, the Virgin on her column ; and on and around the slopes of the steps there are palms and orange-trees and lilies, and hanging gardens, and all the sweet flower-market of the morning.

Down in the Corso, the dome of St. Carlo, ‘like some tall bully, lifts its head,’ and tries to hide from you the one dome that you came to see. Move a few feet ; and there, far off, above the horizon of the houses, rises St. Peter’s, and near it the Vatican.

That is the first sight of Rome from the Trinità steps ; and, as you look, you think, and all the wonderful beauty of the place begins to question you. With the first sight of Rome comes the first clear thought of Rome. And it comes with power, and will not be put down, and asks, again and again, the question that was asked, three times, in one of the poorest and most helpless of Rome’s subject-territories, more than eighteen hundred years ago—‘What went ye out for to see ?’

The good tourist, while he is there, is too busy to answer that question. He tries to see all Rome : her ruins, churches, galleries, shops, and people ; he rushes from place to place, he stares and he

stands till he is utterly tired. It is his one chance, and he does well to make the most of it. But when he is back at home, and his hustled mind is free to sort its memories, he hears the question again. Books and maps and photographs will not answer it for him. The last half-century of the history of Italy; the present quarrel of the Vatican with the French Government; the slackness of all desire, within the Roman Catholic Church, for the recovery of the Papal States; the devotion of so many people of all classes toward the Holy Father—these things are the real Rome. It is not the visible ruins and roses, nor the endless art galleries, nor the tombs of the Popes; not the sights of Rome, but the spirit of Rome; not her past, but her future, that is of chief concern to the world. Fifty years hence, the ‘imprisonment’ of the Pope will take its place in ancient history with the ‘captivity’ at Avignon. What are fifty years, or five hundred, to an Eternal City? The deadlock between the Quirinal and the Vatican, what is it more than one of an interminable series of little movements towards unity?

It is impossible, and more incredible than all the relics in her churches, that Rome should ever become as Venice or Ravenna: that she should stop, fail of her ultimate purpose, be a mere show-place. Every sane man who has seen her knows that she will never die; she ‘moves to some far-off divine event.’ Throw your halfpenny into the Fountain of Trevi, and wish that you may see Rome again. The charm is potent. Back again at home, when you have framed your photographs, distributed your gifts, and put away your guide-books, you do see her again; not her buildings and gardens, but herself, as the world will see and know her in that age when she shall enter into her inheritance. Primal, Primitive, Regal, Republican, Imperial, Papal, Modern—that is the order of her titles; and there is nothing in them, for they are the titles of any old town in Italy. ‘The Eternal City!’ Is that title a mere compliment? Surely we are free to believe, if we can, that Rome, unlike all other cities, was made for all mankind and for all time.

F. R. C. S.

## *The Wren-bush.*

**A**MONG the many odd customs still observed in Ireland at Christmas few are more curious than the practice of carrying about 'the wren-bush' on St. Stephen's Day, and antiquaries are puzzled to explain why the poor little 'king of all birds' should be put to death on the festival of the first martyr.

Very early on this morning the 'wran-boys' make their appearance, going about in bands, each having a 'wran-bush,' a great branch or bunch of holly, ivy, furze, or laurel, adorned with ribbons, streamers, paper flowers, rosettes—indeed, any ornaments the bearers can procure—with a dead wren or some other small bird dangling from the top. One of the party carries the bush, another bears a box, which he rattles vigorously in time to the shrill doggerel chanted by his companions.

This ditty varies in different parts of the country, but the chorus and opening lines are always the same. The following is the song of the Cork wren-boys :

The wran, the wran, the king of all birds !  
 St. Stephen's Day he was caught in the furze ;  
 Although he is little, his family's great,  
 So I pray you, good lady, to give us a *trate* !  
 Sing holly, sing ivy, sing ivy, sing holly !  
 To keep a bad Christmas, it is but a folly !  
 For Christmas comes but once a year,  
 And when it comes, it brings good cheer !  
 Shake, shake, shake the box !  
 All silver, and no brass !  
 Up with the kettle, and down with the pot !  
 Give us our answer, and let us be gone !

Mr. — is a worthy man,  
 Unto his house we've brought the wran—  
 The wran, the wran, that you may see  
 Is guarded by the holly-tree !  
 Sing holly, &c.

God bless this household more and more,  
To all the sick their health restore !  
And if you fill it with the best,  
We'll pray that in Heaven your soul may rest !  
But if you fill it with the small,  
It will not do for our boys at all !  
Sing holly, &c.

There are many verses of this song, and the boys are very clever in improvising stanzas to suit the inmates of each house they visit—highly complimentary if they get anything, very much the reverse if they are refused a ‘lop,’ or a ‘mainty,’ as a penny and halfpenny are called in the quaint old town on ‘the pleasant waters of the river Lee.’

Formerly, if they were given nothing, the wren-boys buried the dead bird by the threshold of the churlish family, which was considered a great disgrace and most unlucky. To this day few people refuse a copper or a share in the Christmas good things to at least one of the many bands of wren-boys that roam through the streets and along the country roads during the early part of St. Stephen’s Day, which, by the way, is never called ‘Boxing Day’ in Ireland.

Most of the wren-boys wear grotesque masks, or pin rosettes and bows of ribbon in their ragged caps. Sometimes they execute a wild dance during the chorus of ‘*Shake, shake, SHAKE the box !*’ rattling the box and its contents in the most furious manner.

They are supposed to have risen very early to go and hunt the wren, but of late years a sparrow is often substituted, or the bush is merely decked with ribbons and paper flowers and no bird—a great improvement, as the wretched wren was cruelly killed with sticks or stones. In 1845 Richard Dowden, then Mayor of Cork, issued a proclamation forbidding ‘the hunting of the wren on St. Stephen’s Day by all the idle fellows of the country,’ on the grounds of the cruelty of the practice. No subsequent mayor, however, has followed his example, and the wren-bush goes its rounds gaily, as it has done for centuries.

The custom is not a very laudable one, apart from the cruelty to the bird, for some of the wren-boys are grown men, to put it mildly, for in Ireland ‘we are all youths till we’re married,’ and *boys* of fifty or so are common. In these circumstances a fight or a drinking-match often ends the excursion, and the older wren-boys sometimes beat and drive away the little lads, who, as a rule, have only a branch for a wren-bush.

In the country the practice is less objectionable, though a wren, or 'dhruleen,' is easier to obtain. In Wexford and other parts of the country a live bird was often fastened to the bush by a long string, and the lads carried it from house to house, singing and dancing, and playing on pipes, whistles, or Jews' harps, sometimes taking hands, and circling round the wren-bush, shouting the familiar song, and shaking the bush and the terrified little captive violently. Money, drink, or eatables were usually given to the wren-boys, and the evening finished up with a feast, which in some places was looked upon as the wren's 'wake.'

Of late years some of the Gaelic clubs in London have attempted to revive the old Irish custom of 'burying the wren' on St. Stephen's night, finishing up with a dance. Needless to say, this was a sort of '*Hamlet with the Prince of Denmark left out*,' for the wren was wanting.

One explanation of this particular practice is that a wren having been killed on Christmas Day, a party of Irish youths gathered coppers so that the bird might be decently buried next day, and held a wake on the 'dhruleen'; but while they were dancing and making merry another wren flew in at the window, and was killed by a cat, and the festivities were adjourned so that the second bird, too, might be 'waked' and buried properly. This, however, seems to be much more like the Manx Christmas custom of 'burying the wren' than the Irish one.

It is strange that this pretty, harmless creature should be thus persecuted at Christmas, for, from time immemorial, 'Jenny Wren' is associated in popular fancy with the special Christmas bird, Cock Robin, and the old rhyme tells us that :

Cock Robin and Jenny Wren  
Are God Almighty's cock and hen.

Another version is :

The robin and the wren  
Are God's two holy men !

while an ancient couplet assures us that—

He who hurts a robin or a wren,  
Will never know good health again !

The Welsh say : 'He who takes a wren's nest will never have health all his life.' Country folk seem to have originally con-

nected the little bird with the Virgin, judging from Drayton's lines :

The hedge-sparrow and her compeer, the wren,  
Which simple people call 'our Lady's hen.'

This superstition, however, did not extend to Ireland, where the robin is revered as 'God's own bird,' and even the most mischievous 'gossoon' leaves it uninjured ; but the wren is hated and killed whenever it is possible. The peasants give various reasons for the slaughter of the wee bird on St. Stephen's Day. One is that, when the Jews were seeking for the first martyr, they were unsuccessful for a long time, as he had hidden himself in a clump of furze, but the attention of the pursuers was drawn to the spot by two wrens, who flew in and out of the bushes, chattering noisily, and St. Stephen was discovered.

Another legend is that a number of these birds once betrayed a band of Irish soldiers, who were stealing on a sleeping troop of Cromwell's men. The wrens suddenly perched on the Irish drums, chirping, twittering, and tapping on the vellum with their tiny beaks, making such a noise that the English awoke, rushed upon their foes, and killed them all ! This, however, does not explain why the birds are persecuted on St. Stephen's Day, so another tradition explains the matter by telling that the robin concealed the Infant Saviour from Herod's messengers by covering Him with moss, which the wren picked away. This evil deed is also assigned to the wagtail, who is said to have three drops of the devil's blood in its body.

The most probable explanation is that the wren was sacred to the Druids, and was used by them in divination and other pagan rites at the festival of the Winter Solstice, which almost coincided with Christmas, and consequently the clergy urged their converts to destroy the birds which were associated with such unholy rites, just as St. Patrick's relentless destruction of the images of serpents, used in the ancient pagan worship of Ireland, gave rise to the legend that he

Gave the snakes and toads a twist,  
And banished them all for ever !

This seems the more likely because 'dreadan,' the old Irish name for 'wren,' also means 'a Druid,' and old folk still call 'Jenny' the 'Druid bird,' and say that she has the gift of prophecy, and that those who can interpret her twitterings as she hovers about a house, or flies from bush to bush, can read the future. In the

library of Trinity College, Dublin, there is a curious document describing how to interpret the notes of the wren.

The fact that hunting the wren formerly prevailed in Wales, the West of England, the Isle of Man, and Ireland—all strongholds of Druidism—serves to confirm the idea that the persecution of the bird was really a blow at the Druids.

Wrens are still hunted in the Isle of Man at Christmas. Waldron tells us that Manx servants formerly had a holiday on Christmas Eve, and stayed up all night, roaming about singing carols, till the Christmas bells rang out, when they started to hunt wrens, and as soon as they had managed to kill one they laid it on a bier, and took it in solemn procession to the parish church, and buried it with a grotesque funeral service, including strange Manx dirges, called 'the knell of the wren.' Surely this was meant to signify the death of Druidism at the Birth of Christ?

Manx boys also hunt the wren, but in a different way. They go out on Christmas Eve with sticks and stones, and when they have killed a wren they hang it by the legs from a pair of crossed hoops, decorated with ribbons and evergreens, and go from door to door singing carols.

Before starting on the wren hunt they sing :

We'll away to the woods, says Robbin the Bobbin,  
 We'll away to the woods, says Richard the Robin,  
 We'll away to the woods, says Jack of the Cone,  
 We'll away to the woods, says every one.  
 What'll we do there? says Robbin the Bobbin, &c.  
 We'll hunt the wren, says Robbin the Bobbin, &c.  
 Where is he? Where is he? says Robbin the Bobbin, &c.  
 In yonder green bush, says Robbin the Bobbin, &c.  
 How can we get him down? says Robbin the Bobbin, &c.  
 With sticks and stones, says Robbin the Bobbin.  
 He's down! He's down! says Robbin the Bobbin.

When the bird is killed they sing :

We hunted the wren for Robbin the Bobbin,  
 We hunted the wren for Richard the Robin,  
 We hunted the wren for Jack of the Cone,  
 We hunted the wren for every one!

Contributions are asked at every door, and in return a feather is given, which is supposed to keep the owner from shipwreck. When the last feather is gone, the poor wee body is buried on the sea shore, dirges being chanted over it. The reason assigned for

this odd practice is that once a beautiful but wicked fairy dwelt in the Isle of Man, and caused all the knights of the land to fall in love with her, when she decoyed them into the sea and drowned them. At last a brave warrior resisted her spells, and tried to kill her, but she escaped in the form of a wren. The knight cast a spell over her, and condemned her to appear in that form every Christmas till she perished by human hands. Ever since wrens have been hunted at this season, on the chance of killing the enchantress.

In Wales the dead wren was often placed in a box and hoisted upon long poles, which were carried by four strong men, who pretended it was a very heavy burden. They sang a carol, describing the hunting and death of the bird. In Pembrokeshire a live wren was taken round in a wooden box, or little house, on Twelfth Day, its bearers singing 'The Song of the Wren.'

Round Dublin a box or tiny coffin, decked with ribbons and evergreens, is sometimes substituted for the 'wren-bush,' and a considerable sum is often collected by the bearers, who sing the praises of 'the king of all birds,' whom they have cruelly stoned to death and laid in his coffin.

The little creature is known as the 'king of all birds,' the 'little king,' or the 'hedge king' in almost every European land where its alert form is seen. The story goes that when the birds competed for the sovereignty of the feathered race, the wren won the prize by stratagem. It was agreed that the bird who soared highest should be king, and everyone expected that the eagle would win the day; but when the appointed time came, and all the birds at a given signal started upon their aërial race, the wren hid in the eagle's crest.

The great bird soon outdistanced all competitors, and soared up and up, till he seemed within reach of the glowing sun. Then, deeming victory certain, he turned, and began to descend; but lo! the wren flew out of his crest with a twitter of triumph, and darted up close to the radiant orb, while the weary and disappointed eagle sank slowly to the earth.

Perhaps this tale, like the legend that the golden-crested wren brought fire from the sun for the use of men, getting his crest scorched in the attempt, may be traced to the Druids and their worship of the heavenly bodies.

MAUD E. SARGENT.

## *At the Sign of the Ship.*

THE late Lord Acton was a man of enormous reading and of a high repute as an historian, who, somehow, never *did* write his book, his *History of Liberty*. It remains unborn, like Mr. Caxton's *History of Human Error*, which, to a Tory, sounds like another name for the same thing. Lord Acton, unable to write his book himself, seems to have thought that others labour under a share of the same disability, and he founded a kind of joint-stock company for producing a book by division of labour. Of this work I have been so un-English as to buy the second volume : *The Cambridge Modern History—The Reformation*.

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It contains more than eight hundred pages, including a bibliography and an index, but scarcely exhibits a single footnote, or reference for a given fact to a given authority. For whom can this book be intended ? If for 'the reading public,' they hate notes, and appear to think that history is a plain tale, written by the author 'out of his own head.' Notes distract the kittenlike attention of the public, and notes mention books of which they never heard, which are not to be had at Mudie's, and which they never dream of consulting. I have been severely blamed by a friend for publishing things about several historical personages which are not to be found in other books about them, and form no part of the tradition about them. That the facts are true and essential is considered no excuse for their publication. While people think of history in this way notes and references are mere tedious superfluities. But if the eminent Cambridge and other hands are afraid of frightening away the general public by notes, why do they give up a hundred pages to a list of authorities ? These the public do not want, and the student, whether an historical inquirer or a man reading for an examination, does not get what he wants in these hundred pages. They do not tell him, valuable

as they are, what he wants to know—namely, what is the authority for this or that statement made by the eminent hands.

\* \* \*

Thus we read the Rev. Dr. Fairbairn, of Mansfield College, Oxford, in *Calvin and the Reformed Church*. He tells us that, at a date not given, but prior to 1530, certain Catholic patriots at Geneva were known as 'Eyguenots,' 'confederates,' 'men who had bound themselves by an oath.' Is 'Eyguenots' the same word as 'Huguenots,' and to what language does 'Eyguenots' belong? A note would tell us, but there is no note. I look up Professor Baird's *Rise of the Huguenots*, and find him quoting a private diary of one Vinot, begun in 1563. Vinot says that in 1561 (he means 1560) began in France the sect of 'Huggenotz,' or, 'à mieux dire, Egnossen,' so styled because they wanted free towns, like the Swiss, called in German *Egnossen*, that is 'Allies' (*Eidgenossen*). Is this *Egnossen*, equivalent to Huguenots, the same as Dr. Fairbairn's mysterious 'Eyguenots,' and, if not, where does Dr. Fairbairn get his information? In the five pages of his list of authorities, one or another author reveals this mystery, no doubt, and I may be very ignorant, as I do not know which of them is quoted; but the plan of the book should be such as to enlighten the ignorant.

\* \* \*

Instances of this kind are common. Mr. Maitland's brilliant article on the Reformation in Scotland touches on the romantic 'Tumult of Amboise,' in March 1560. Had there been no such tumult (a plot to catch or kill the Guise uncles of the Queen of France, Mary Stuart) it would, perhaps, have been impossible for England to bring triumph to the cause of John Knox and drive the French out of Scotland. But the Amboise conspiracy paralysed France. One naturally guesses that Cecil and Elizabeth inspired and subsidised the French plotters, and Mr. Maitland says 'we wish to know why a certain Tremaine was sent to Britanny, where the plotters were gathering, and whether Chantonnay was right in saying that "La Renaudie" (the French ringleader) had been at the English Court.' Certainly we wish to know, but we also wish to know how Mr. Maitland knows; what is his evidence? Probably it is in the Calendars of our State Papers, but it would be infinitely convenient to have the exact reference to these Calendars, such as historians usually give when they are not writing in a joint-stock book.

\* \* \*

If there must be an avoidance of footnotes, for fear of frightening away the timid general reader, could not exact references be given at the end of each volume ? These would serve the purpose of the long bibliography, would not occupy more space than the bibliography, and would be really serviceable. Thus, say that you have read this passage of Mr. Maitland's. You might then turn to the notes at the end of the book and find, under 'page 576, line 6 from foot of page,' the reference you require. There need not even be a number indicating a note on page 576, for such marks worry the general reader, whom a great university seems to be seeking to conciliate. Will the accomplished editors not make this little concession to the inquirer who really wants to know, and to the man who is reading for Honours or a Pass ? History *sans* references is unsatisfactory.

\* \* \*

The co-operative plan, as managed by the editors, causes overlapping, repetition, and even incongruity. Thus Mr. Tilley, as well as Mr. Maitland, tells the story of the Tumult of Amboise, but leaves out the probable part of Cecil in provoking it. Mr. Tilley involves Condé, as a certain thing : Mr. Maitland says that 'behind La Renaudie men have seen Condé,' as if it were a mere surmise. Now, an individual, writing history, does not speak thus with two voices. He says that Condé was in the plot, or was not in the plot, or that he is uncertain, and he gives his evidence.

\* \* \*

If we look up 'Servetus,' we find Dr. Fairbairn, in his account of Calvin, saying that the opinions of Servetus were 'judged criminal.' On this topic, so painful to Protestants, Dr. Fairbairn says no more. He may have divined, by telepathy, or his editors may have warned him, that the Bishop of Gibraltar, writing about *The Catholic South*, says in this book that Calvin denounced his opponent, here called 'Miguel Serveto y Reves,' to the Inquisition, that Serveto fled to Geneva, and that there Calvin had his brother Protestant burned at the stake. That was one of what Dr. Fairbairn calls his 'irenical services to Protestantism,' and for 'irenical' we must not read 'ironical.' 'Calvin thought that the one way to realise Christianity was by knowing the mind of Christ,' and he knew so little of it that, being an anti-Catholic, he denounced another anti-Catholic to the Inquisition, and then burned the poor fellow, who fancied himself safe in a Protestant city, with 'an

enlightened pulpit speaking to enlightened citizens,' as Dr. Fairbairn says. 'Thy temples were lit with live torches,' Monsieur Calvin! Forty pages later the Bishop of Gibraltar lets out the melancholy truth—that is, if in 'Miguel Serveto y Reves' the general reader recognises Dr. Fairbairn's 'Servetus,' whose opinions were 'judged criminal' at Geneva.

\* \* \*

History by an individual is not this congeries of articles, longer or shorter, articles not free from variants and repetitions, but quite free from cross-references. To make history written by a set of eminent hands quite coherent demands much labour on the side of the editors; and to make any history serviceable the exact references are indispensable.

\* \* \*

Mr. Maitland himself (a writer so learned that he can afford also to be entertaining) would not wish the amateur to pass many hours in hunting for a 'certain Tremaine who was sent to Britanny.' He would rather give a reference, and save me from hunting this Mr. Tremaine like a partridge on the mountains. I pursued him up and down, because I foresaw that there were romantic components in Tremaine's history, something likely to be useful to the novelist. Nor was my guess mistaken; the Tremaines were 'all of them desirable young men,' whom Mr. Stanley Weyman might find serviceable. They were of a Cornish family, and one of them seems to have fought well against the French who held Leith against the English and John Knox's allies in the spring of 1560. There is plenty of fine picturesque fighting and spy work in that affair. The Tremaine hinted at by Mr. Maitland was in Wyatt's insurrection against Mary Tudor, and escaped to France, and went on plotting, probably in connection with Geneva, where many Protestant plots were hatched. When Elizabeth came to the throne he returned to England, whither the English Ambassador at Paris, Throckmorton, sent for him, having a delicate piece of business on hand. The young Earl of Arran, the heir to the Crown of Scotland if Queen Mary proved childless (she was then the bride of Francis II. of France), had been acting as commander of the French King's Scottish archers. But Arran had become a Protestant, and had suddenly disappeared, being 'wanted' by the French police. Now, Throckmorton had invented a plan; he would bring Arran safely out of France, by way of Germany, and marry him to Queen

Elizabeth. When the heir of the Crown of Scotland, Arran, was the husband of the Queen of England, Queen Mary would never be Queen of Scotland. In that country Knox's friends were at that moment up in arms, wrecking churches at a great rate. Now, to pilot Arran into safety (he was skulking in a forest, living meagrely on strawberries) Throckmorton sent to England for Dick Tremaine, who spoke French and German like a native. He was so young that he might profess to be going to Geneva 'for his study and learning.' (July 17, 1554.)

\* \* \*

For some reason to me unknown, Dick Tremaine did not go on this adventure ; it was achieved by Thomas Randolph. But in February 1560 Dick undertook a larger enterprise. He was in touch with the Genevan conspirators, who, again, were associated with the French Protestants, who wanted to kill the Guises, and to make the Prince de Condé regent, thrusting aside our Mary Stuart and Francis II. So, early in February 1560, Dick went to Normandy and Britanny, and dealt for Elizabeth with the Huguenot conspirators, who held a kind of secret parliament at Nantes, and laid their plan for a raid on the Guises in March.

\* \* \*

These good Huguenots were not too scrupulous. They put about a story that Francis of France was a leper, in consequence of which belief people hid away their children in the pretty towns on the Loire, whither the King was coming. It was not for fear of infection ; the fable was circulated that the young leprous King took baths of the blood of small boys and girls, like the monster Gilles de Retz. Two men went about the Loire towns averring that they had a royal commission 'to seek fair children to use their blood for curing a disease which the King had. One of them was to go before to make search for the children, and the other came after to ask if such a man had been there for such a purpose. Whereupon the people made lamentation for their children, and he took upon him to help to liberate them, and to cause their names to be put out of the book'—that is, the book in which the first man kept the names of the victims. They made a good deal of money by way of ransom for the children, till one of the scoundrels was caught and executed at Blois. To be fair, I cannot prove that this was a Huguenot scheme for getting the King disliked, though

by so doing it worked into the Huguenot machinations. His Majesty was made so uncomfortable that he galloped home from the chase in a great fright one day, and the English Ambassador, Throckmorton, supposed that the scheme was got up by the enemies of the Guises.

\* \* \*

Tremaine was not mixed up with this affair of the children and the blood-baths. But whereas he went to Britanny, in February 1560, he next joined Throckmorton, who was following the French Court, at Blois or Amboise. And then, at Amboise, the conspiracy broke out early in March. Bands of armed men lurked in the woods, concentrating to catch the French King in the château of Amboise. There a panic arose among the courtiers, which Throckmorton reports day by day, as if he and Mr. Richard Tremaine, now with him, were as innocent as babes. The Guises had wind of the plot, and culling band after band of conspirators like flowers, before they concentrated. As they were very persistent, things came to torture and executions in batches. Throckmorton, in a great fright, kept writing that he ought to be recalled, instantly and secretly, as people were mean enough to suspect *him* of a hand in the affair. Probably he had a hand, he and Tremaine, for these tumults arose in the nick of time, so as to prevent France from sending reinforcements to Scotland, to put down Knox's friends. Elizabeth was, in short, raising the devil in France, as well as in Scotland, to serve her private ends. Throckmorton was not at once recalled, but he sent Dick Tremaine home by way of Britanny, carrying despatches. He seems to have done some useful conspiring on the way, obtaining offers of towns to be betrayed to England.

\* \* \*

After that I lose sight of Mr. Richard Tremaine. One of the family, Nicholas (?), was later killed in a cavalry charge before Dieppe; but he, I think, may have been the soldier brother who fought in the siege of Leith. Dick was so clever that, in January 1561, Throckmorton wanted to send him to the Council of Trent, to make mischief among the princes of Germany. I have pursued Mr. Tremaine no further; any novelist who wants an adventurous hero may chevy him through the Calendars of State Papers and other despatches.

\* \* \*

People in the sixteenth century really went and did the kind of things which authors like Mr. Stanley Weyman put into their delightful novels. The critics of middle-class minds hold up their hands in holy horror of these romances, and ask for 'truth' and 'realities.' But these things *were* realities, were of frequent occurrence. The observers on the spot, writing day by day, the diplomats, record them, and think but little of them. This excellent Throckmorton is not at all surprised or horrified by the doings at Amboise, neither by the conspiracy (probably he expected *that*), nor by the executions which followed. They are all in the day's work ; he uses no fine language about them.

\* \* \*

The escape of the young Duke, Charles de Guise, from prison, after the murder of his father at Blois, is a feat so 'sensational' that a modern novelist would be afraid to put it in a chapter. He, the Duke, gets his gaoler to run a race with him up the staircase of a tower ; he locks the gaoler into the room at the top ; he goes down to the platform, he takes a rope which has been brought to him inside a violin (good business, that !), he ties it to a battlement, and lets himself down some sixty feet. The gaoler, looking out from the room in which he has been locked up, yells to the guards. They blow up their matches, they fire their clumsy harquebuses at the boy as he slips down his rope. They miss ; he slides down, his hands bleeding ; he reaches the ground, swims a river, meets a casual citizen on a horse, knocks him off his saddle, mounts, gallops away, and, in a little wood, encounters a score of mounted men of the right sort, his friends, and canters out of the reach of his enemies. They were all ready to do trifling things of that kind ; the public remained 'more than usual calm.' Romance was realism at that period.

\* \* \*

Moreover, people do take contemporary events, at least at a distance, with comparative coolness. The Servian murders, things more horrible than any deed of the sort at the Court of Holyrood, were received in London with perfect indifference. The Bartholomew massacre was calculated to excite the mind, but I read that, three months later, Queen Elizabeth was godmother to the daughter of Charles IX., who had just been pottng at his

subjects out of the window. This is stated in a French historical work of 1893 ; if true it is a little surprising, not to mention the difference of religion between the godmother and goddaughter.

\* \* \*

A new novel, in which, to the delight of an old-fashioned reader, interesting things do happen, is *The Shadow of a Throne*, by Mr. Daveys.<sup>1</sup> The plot centres round Louis XVII., the poor little Dauphin, whom the friends of Liberty did to death by unspeakable ill-usage in the Temple. As a matter of fact, if I may believe the only authority at hand, Wraxall, in his *Remarkable Adventures* (1863), the evidence for the death of the child is anything but satisfactory. A boy died, right enough, but was he the Royal boy ? One Naundorff, a watchmaker, said that *he* was the Royal boy, for whom other boys had been substituted, one here, another there, till the brain reels in trying to follow the mazes of the plot. Probably Mr. Daveys does not believe in Naundorff's legend, but he has made a rare good tale out of it, mixing in the famous case of mistaken identity familiar in the play of *The Lyons Mail*. When we find the soul of Marie Antoinette 'materialising' in the interests of her son's escape, romance is carried rather too far. But it is an excellent yarn ; the hero who rescues the Dauphin is an Englishman, and his mode of treating the fiend who boasts of having eaten the heart of the Princesse de Lamballe warms the reader's heart. This is a novel which you can recommend to a friend, if he likes adventures.

\* \* \*

Mr. Seton Merriman's posthumous novel, which I have not seen, is also concerned with one of these pseudo-Dauphins. The last of them was the Rev. Ebenezer Williams, 'a missionary among the Choctaws, whose claims were very warmly taken up by the American Press,' writes the learned Wraxall. This divine is not Mr. Seton Merriman's hero. The great popularity of the regretted author has never been quite explicable to me. I have read several of his books with eagerness, not because they actually interested me, but because they made me feel that they were just going to begin to be interesting. They did not keep their promise, to my taste, but that is only a single vote, and the public obviously found them full of interest.

\* \* \*

<sup>1</sup> Hutchinson.

What an amazing tragedy after the manner of Gilbert and Sullivan is the affair of 'The Wee Frees,' as they call it in Scotland! One knows not whether to laugh or weep, or do both alternately, in contemplating a decision which gives to about twenty-four Highland ministers and congregations the wealth, the colleges, the buildings, manses, and kirks—and I suppose the so-called House of John Knox—all the property of the Free Kirk. The dauntless Twenty-Four, I understand, represent the political and theological ideas of the Free Kirk as it was when hundreds of ministers, for these ideas, gave up their pleasing glebes and manses, just sixty years ago. In my lifetime, I regret to say, the Free Kirk was born, flourished, and then, abandoning all that its founders held sacred (or a good deal of that), contracted itself out of certain of its dearest dogmas, and united with the United Presbyterians. But the Celtic Twenty-four 'Frees' of the ancient rock have been awarded the possessions on which that ancient rock was erected, speaking carnally. Somebody must have made some monstrous blunder. Surely the Free Kirkers of to-day could have obtained Parliamentary sanction for their *volte-face*, before they made it. That sanction obtained, I presume that they might have professed esoteric Buddhism, and yet kept their property. But the pathetic thing is that, as the law stands (and the law may be what Mr. Bumble called it), they cannot do as they please with their property.

\* \* \*

The debates on the topic in the House of Lords read like a dream. Here is Mr. Haldane assuring the judges that they take an anthropomorphic view of the relations between man and his Maker! As if the divines who flourished these amazing 'standards' of Calvinistic belief took a view which was *not* anthropomorphic! Kant and Plato, and the purely hallucinatory character of Time and Space, were hurled at the judicial heads, and the judges declined to see what these authors and opinions had to do with 'the standards of the Kirk.' The Twenty-Four do not seem to see it either. That a Court of Law should debate on Free Will and Predestination seems of a high comedy, or tragedy, one knows not which. But it is like anything delightful, the clear shining of the sun after rain, to find the learned Chancellor quoting, in Greek, the ideas of a Council of the Greek Church, to the unspeakable amazement of the reporters. To a casual observer but one fact is certain: 'The decision of the Umpire must not be disputed.' The Muckle Free

Kirk has been no-balled, or given 'out,' and must make the best of the situation. There is no use in swearing at the umpire in the pavilion, as, alas, too many sportsmen do. What would John Knox say, if he were alive? Nobody can guess, but he would let the judges have their kail through the reek, from the pulpit; that is, unless he happened to be on the winning side.

ANDREW LANG.

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